



1941

# The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Their Schools in Chicago, 1867-1940

Mary Anna Rose Callan

*Loyola University Chicago*

## Recommended Citation

Callan, Mary Anna Rose, "The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Their Schools in Chicago, 1867-1940" (1941).  
*Master's Theses*. Paper 607.  
[http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\\_theses/607](http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/607)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact [ecommons@luc.edu](mailto:ecommons@luc.edu).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Copyright © 1941 Mary Anna Rose Callan

4

THE SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
AND THEIR SCHOOLS IN CHICAGO  
1867-1940

\*

by

Sister Mary Anna Rose Callan, B.V.M.

\*

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Loyola University

1941

\*

## C O N T E N T S

### Introduction

Chapter I	The foundation of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary . . . . .	Page 1
Chapter II	The Holy Family Center: First Chicago Foundations . . . . .	25
Chapter III	Later Parochial Foundations . . . . .	54
Chapter IV	High Schools and College . . . . .	108
Conclusion	. . . . .	138
Bibliography	. . . . .	141

\*

\*

\*

\*

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This account of the history of Chicago schools under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is written with a view to providing information valuable to the Community historian, not only in bringing the Community's history up to date, but also in aiding her to pass on to the Sisters the rich heritage of the Congregation in Chicago. Besides the Community interests, writers of local history frequently have desired to include in various studies the development of the parochial as well as the public school systems of Chicago. In this honest effort they have been impeded because of the lack of available material on the subject. Another reason for this research problem, therefore, is to provide a chapter for those interested in compiling a synthetic history of Catholic activity in Chicago.

\*

\*

\*

CHAPTER I  
THE FOUNDATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE  
SISTERS OF CHARITY  
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Marked by manifestations of Divine Guidance from its very inception, the events which make up the history of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary read almost like a story book. Its earliest days were eventful; peculiar happenings which took place on land and sea are recorded. Strong faith was frequently tried by seeming failure, by losses through flood and fire, and yet, in all, success or adversity, its members, fired with the same strong Faith, saw only the Providence of God.

It was the cholera plague which ran rampant in Dublin in 1831 that gave rise to the summoning of many a youth to enlist in the charitable work of caring for God's poor and afflicted. In answer to this call Mary Francis Clarke, Rose O'Toole, Elizabeth Kelly and Margaret Mann (at a later date) were brought together. As members of the same sodality whose aim it was to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, these young women soon became close friends, and each soon recognized in the others an ambition common to herself: to become holy and to do good to her fellow-creatures, for the love of God. Impressed by the lack of religious education among the Irish people, while working among the plague-stricken victims, these young women, when the plague subsided, decided to pool their efforts to aid Mother Church in bringing enlightenment to her children in Ireland by giving themselves up to teaching.

Aid from the Holy Ghost was asked; parental advice was sought; consent was given, and with the encouragement derived from these sources, plus their own eagerness, the plan to give instructions for the Irish children grew

until it took the form of action. On December 8, 1831, for the first time, the young women met in the cottage which they had rented as headquarters for their charitable endeavors, in the suburbs of Dublin. Here plans were made to develop an organized approach to their works for the week. Here, also, on the eves of festivals and Sundays each made special preparation for the reception of Holy Communion, and, in general, each was so strengthened by the example of the others that a common desire to lead a higher life was enkindled, but, as yet, they did not lead a community life. In the meantime, they prepared themselves by special study both in the secular and religious fields, and were ready to begin teaching.<sup>1</sup>

The thirst of the Irish for education made itself felt, for, in a short time, children flocked to the young women for instructions. The law making it a criminal offense for an Irishman to read had been abrogated. The National Education Act of 1831 being then enforced, the nationality-conscious Irishman rebelled at having his children in institutions which he knew were designed for the Anglicizing of the rising generation at the expense of Catholic teachings, Irish literature, and language. These conditions determined the young women to give instructions not only in religious topics but also in elementary subjects supplemented by sewing and the singing of hymns. Thus began their apostolate of education. While still being conducted in the suburban cottage, the work was given added impetus by the valuable assistance rendered the enthusiastic group in the addition of Mrs. Berkley to their staff. She was the childless widow of an English army officer, and, once acquainted with the plans, Mrs. Berkley spent all her

---

<sup>1</sup>Sister Mary Lambertina Doran, In the Early Days, Pages from the Annals of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Louis, 1925, p. 5.

time in the small cottage, attending it with great zeal. It was her great fear of the ocean that kept her from coming to America with the others.

The Annals of the Congregation relate that "in the short intervals which their various duties permitted for rest they were not idle," but with exquisite skill their busy fingers embroidered many beautiful articles for church purposes. In preparing a set of vestments, they first met Catherine Byrne,<sup>2</sup> who was occupied in the pharmacy of the principal hospital of the city. This young girl recognized her calling to our Sisters' manner of life, but not until the eve of their departure for America was she enabled to join them permanently.<sup>3</sup>

To continue the work planned, the cottage proved too small, so on the feast of their patron, St. Joseph, March, 1832, they moved from the suburban cottage to a place on North Ann Street, Dublin, where they opened the school called "Miss Clarke's School." Here a room was fitted out as an oratory and here was the cradle of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The teaching faculty in Miss Clarke's School was made up of Mary Francis Clarke, Margaret Mann, Rose O'Toole, Elizabeth Kelly, and Catherine Byrne.

Mary Francis Clarke was born in Dublin, Ireland, March 2, 1803. Her parents were Cornelius Clarke, a prosperous dealer in leather, and Catherine Quartermas, the daughter of an English Quakeress. Both were outstanding in their piety and practice of Christian virtues. The poor knew them for their magnificent generosity. Mr. and Mrs. Clarke had determined that if their first child were a girl they would have her christened Catherine, but in a

<sup>2</sup>Catherine Byrne was a native of Dublin who received her education with the Nuns, in whose care she had been placed after the death of her parents.

<sup>3</sup>Doran, In the Early Days, pp. 7-8.

4

dream it was made known to Mrs. Clarke that the girl should be called Mary. When the baby was brought to the Marlborough Street parish church to be baptized, the Franciscan Father who performed the ceremony added the name Francis in honor of the patron of his Order. The emulation of her patroness and patron early became evident in the life of Mary Francis. Two younger sisters and a brother grew up with the little girl in their happy home where they received excellent opportunities for educational development under the tutorship of their kinsman, Mr. Matherson.<sup>4</sup>

Opportunity to demonstrate the quality of her training and development came when her father's health failed him after a destructive fire had demolished all his business resources. Mary Francis, for some years after this disaster, assumed the complete responsibilities of her father's business and by her intelligent planning, industry, and care, she succeeded in bringing prosperity back into the Clarke home.

Success having been attained in this venture for her parents and family, Mary Francis Clarke, filled with a great desire to work for the glory of God and the spread of the Catholic faith, turned over to her sisters the responsibility of carrying on the family business. Mary Francis was then free to respond to the call of her vocation. Frequently during the years that followed, Mary Francis Clarke made use of the knowledge that these lessons in business and organization had procured for her.

Margaret Mann, born in Dublin on March 7, 1807, was the daughter of John and Ann Thompson Mann. For their Catholicity, her parents had shared fully in the sufferings inflicted on adherents to the ancient Faith in Ireland. Margaret became engaged in the millinery business and as sole proprietor of an establishment, she engaged the services of about twenty-five girls. With her sympathetic, motherly nature, she loved each of

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 7.



these girls and in turn was loved by them. She entered into their every joy and sorrow and, with her characteristic zeal, looked after their spiritual exercises. When she desired to close her business to spend all her time in God's service, she retained her employees in her pay, even at a great pecuniary sacrifice, until a new position had been procured for each one elsewhere.

Another star for Dublin's crown was added, April 6, 1809, when Elizabeth Kelly came into the world to brighten the home of her well-to-do parents, Michael and Mary Hyland Kelly. Upon this child, whom they dearly loved, Mr. and Mrs. Kelly lavished all the gratifications and advantages which their position could secure. With all this attention Elizabeth was not spoiled; rather she practiced the virtues of charity and compassion toward God's poor with such zeal that she became expert as a social worker. Elizabeth was given varied opportunities to develop the splendid mental talents that were hers, and these she did not waste, for, from the very beginning of her apostolate, she did much to promote the educational interests of the community.

Success attended every effort in Dublin. The new school on North Ann Street had a greater attendance than Miss Clarke and her companions had expected.

The patronage came largely from the middle class, those whose means forbade the sending of their children to the convent schools and who were yet too proud to send them to the so-called "poor schools"...All went well; the various pastors gave to the work their blessing and approbation, and with words of praise and frequent visits to the school were a strength and happiness to the teachers and pupils.<sup>5</sup>

There was no one, up to this time, distinguished among the Sisters as a

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

superior, yet, even from the first, the Annals note that there was a tacit agreement existing among them, that Mary Francis Clarke was higher than the others in the point of sanctity. The very fact that the doorplate of the school reads "Miss Clarke's School" indicates her leadership in the community even from the earliest days. In the work of directing the school she was ably assisted by Margaret Mann, who, in later years, referred to herself as "the man of the house" and it was upon her that the business management of the young school and the new congregation in America depended.

It is said of the North Ann Street home that

silence and peace were the outward characteristics of the place which was instinct with life and vigor, and closer attention to a well-prepared plan made them approach more nearly the religious life they loved. This was a time of prayer, study, labor; to the exercises of the contemplative life they added works of active charity, visits to the sick and the afflicted, alms and benefactions to the friendless and infirm, teaching all with whom they came in contact to know and serve God.<sup>6</sup>

As yet they wore no distinctive dress, but were called "the Nuns of North Ann Street."

On the feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1832, Holy Mass was celebrated for the first time in their chapel, and from that day until their departure for America, permission having been obtained from Most Reverend Archbishop Murray, the Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the private chapel at the North Ann Street home. The chaplain appointed was the Reverend Patrick Costello from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who had gone to Ireland in search of health. By his tales of missionary work in America, by his stress upon the necessity of Catholic teachers in his own diocese to provide for the spiritual needs of the children of Irish immigrants, he so appealed to the zealous minds of Miss Clarke and her companions that they

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

were prompted to accept his invitation to labor in the vineyard of the Lord in the New World.<sup>7</sup> However, Father Costello's appeals were far from being the deciding factor in this stupendous proposition of leaving their flourishing school in Ireland to enter into another field in far-off America. Before deciding the issue, they had recourse to prayer to know God's will and they also sought advice from their parents. While it was decided that from a

spiritual point of view, acceptance would be heroic: in any other light it would be a serious blunder...Their ardent souls were fired with holy enthusiasm; their hearts were stirred with inspiration. Their favorite novena to the Blessed Virgin was made with all the fervor of their hearts, and to their good patron Saint Joseph their united petitions arose. At Holy Communion God spoke to their hearts. When they arose from prayer, their decision was made. They would go to America.<sup>8</sup>

Once the will of God was seen in the invitation to America, it became easy to sacrifice the spiritual and temporal peace that had come with the school's success, as well as the comforts of home.

Their chaplain decided to precede them in order to prepare all things for their arrival in Philadelphia. After giving Mary Francis Clarke and her companions exact directions for the journey and having made plans for them so that no discomfort would be theirs, he bade them farewell, with the promise of meeting them on their arrival in Philadelphia. The "word of the wise" was used on every side to dissuade these young women from undertaking an enterprise which was termed "foolhardy" but all the arguments were in vain against a conviction that Providence was directing the movement.

Saddened parents aided in the preparations for the journey, but with

---

<sup>7</sup>"A Valiant Woman's Work," Our Herald, St. Joseph's Convent, Dubuque, Iowa, XII (1924), p. 351.

<sup>8</sup> Doran, In the Early Days, p. 11.

characteristic faith in the joy attending a sacrifice, they exclaimed, "God's Holy Will be done!" In the preparations, an interesting event occurred which manifests the protection of the ever-watchful Father over His infant Congregation:

The Sisters were crossing the Liffey [in Dublin] when suddenly, with a loud crash, the middle span of the bridge snapped and fell just as they stood trembling on the very edge of the splintered beams. A crowd quickly gathered to rescue the injured, and in the confusion and clamor that ensued, a venerable man approached the Sisters, guided them through the throng to a place of safety and said as he was leaving them, "Go where you will, Ladies; the hand of God is over you and will protect you." Before the Sisters could speak their gratitude, their benefactor had disappeared, but they believed him to be their good patron Saint Joseph, and their devotion to this great saint, which is one of our most treasured legacies, was singularly intensified. The consoling words he had spoken, the protection of his power in the time of peril, were tokens of God's good pleasure in their enterprise.<sup>9</sup>

Those setting out for America were Mary Francis Clarke, Margaret Mann, Elizabeth Kelly, and Catherine Byrne, Rose O'Toole being detained on business in Dublin for some time. On their last morning in Dublin, they assisted at Mass celebrated by the Reverend P.R. Kenrick, who later became the Archbishop of St. Louis. Even at this late hour, Father Kenrick did all in his power to discourage them from continuing the undertaking, begging them earnestly to remain in Ireland.

However, on Thursday, July 18, 1833, the Cassandra sailed from Liverpool, bearing the four apostles of Catholic education to the United States. The fire at Old St. Joseph's Prairie in 1849 destroyed the records which may have related minute details of the journey to America, but that this voyage was fraught with dangers may be assumed, for the Annals relate

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

that "there were dreadful storms, tropical heat and the shifting of the cargo which all but sank the ship"<sup>10</sup> to try the four, but Faith coming to the rescue, they found consolation in their confidence that God knew all and would guide them according to His holy Will. By August 15 they were eagerly scanning the horizon for a sight of land which did not come into view until September 1. Though great was the happiness that the sight of land gave to the travelers on this Sunday, it was short-lived, for they were to undergo another trial before disembarking in New York.

The fortunes of all had been pooled before they left Ireland and the entire amount of gold coin was given into the hands of Elizabeth Kelly for safe-keeping, but, just as she was leaving the ship, her purse in some inexplicable manner became unfastened, and "with sad, affrighted eyes the Sisters beheld their money roll splashing down into the sea."<sup>11</sup> And so, it was a cross which welcomed them to the land of their adoption, but this pecuniary privation was accepted as a manifestation of the Divine Will and a preparation for the Holy Vow of Poverty of which they had made a study. Gently, the others spoke comfortingly to the Sister who had been the instrument of their loss, and, without a change of plan, they continued their journey, remaining for a few days in the home of Mrs. Reilly (aunt of Mr. Burns<sup>12</sup>) in New York, and then went on to Philadelphia, where they arrived on Saturday, September 7, 1833. Here they were confronted with a new problem. Their former chaplain, who had repeatedly told them of the Philadelphia bishop's delight at their acceptance of his invitation to

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Burns and John Early were the Irish companions of the Sisters on the voyage. Mr. Burns came to America to enter the Seminary in New York, and Mr. Early was on his way to the Jesuit Novitiate at Frederick, Maryland.

teach in his diocese, did not appear to meet them, although they had notified him of their coming. "Later it was learned that his mind had become deranged, and the Sisters' remembrance of their dismay, as they waited in vain for his coming, became sincere pity for his great affliction."<sup>13</sup>

They were total strangers in a strange land. This second lesson in detachment was a hard one, but it only tended to increase their already strong faith in the need to rely on God alone. And well it might, for once again, when their problem was almost beyond their power of solution, they were approached by one whose features had been impressed vividly upon their minds at Liffey Bridge: St. Joseph once more guided them. The story relates they were informed that St. Joseph's church in Willings Alley was near at hand, so to it they went, where "in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament their full hearts found relief."<sup>14</sup>

When about to leave the church, they met Mrs. Margaret McDonogh, whose name still heads the list of the Congregation's benefactors. This good lady, herself from Dublin, saw their distress and aided them to procure living quarters in Willings Alley, not far from the church. She tried in numerous ways to assist the Sisters in a monetary manner, but they steadfastly refused, as they had come to befriend, not to be befriended. Each Sister pleaded with Mother Clarke to secure permission to seek a position which would support the group and enable them to live as a community and to open a school, but the answer just as consistently was, "No, God has brought us together for a purpose. He will provide the way and the means for us to continue our community life."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Doran, In the Early Days, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

Mrs. McDonogh hastened to tell her old friend and former pastor, the Very Reverend Terence James Donaghoe, about these "nuns," who were so destitute and yet so unwilling to be assisted with anything not earned by their own labors. So well did she tell her touching story that Father Donaghoe was moved, and on Tuesday, September 10, 1833, he went to see the "Irish nuns" in their comfortless little room, wherein only the fire of Faith, and Hope, and Love burned. The "Irish nuns" were cold, for their efforts to enkindle a fire had been fruitless. Even Catherine Byrne, in spite of her name, failed to coax the flames. Just as Catherine, her face soot-streaked, turned to the other Sisters exclaiming that she believed the grate bewitched, Father Donaghoe entered the room. He quickly viewed the situation, explained that kindling should be beneath the coal instead of on top of it, and by demonstrating his thesis for them, the chill soon left the room and Father Donaghoe and the "Irish nuns" became engaged in friendly conversation.<sup>16</sup> The priest quickly saw the happiness of the Sisters despite their trials. His own great confidence in the Almighty found a counter-part in the supreme confidence in omnipotent Love demonstrated by Mother Clarke and her followers, and so he enlisted their services for his Sunday school. Upon seeing their ability to teach, he realized that his prayers to procure guardians for his children were answered.

St. Michael's parochial school was not ready, so it was thought best to open a private school, which was established at 520 Second Street, although the Sisters continued to live in Willings Alley near St. Joseph's.

<sup>16</sup>

Ibid., p. 26.

An oratory was fitted up in this little home wherein was enshrined the statue of the Blessed Virgin which they later brought to Iowa. Mass and visits to the Blessed Sacrament were attended at St. Joseph's church, which was at this time under the direction of the Community's friends, Fathers Kenny and Dubuisson, of the Society of Jesus.<sup>17</sup>

Father Donaghoe had great love and respect for the religious life; in fact, he had contemplated becoming a Jesuit himself, but upon the advice of his spiritual director, a Jesuit, he decided to wait and pray. In the summer of 1833, before Father Donaghoe had heard of the Sisters, he made his annual retreat under the direction of Father Dzierozynski, S.J. at Frederick, Maryland. During this retreat, it was his desire to determine whether or not he should become a Jesuit. Knowing the seriousness of this decision, Father Dzierozynski, at the opening of the retreat, went to Brother Faye, S.J. and asked him to pray that God would give him light to direct a certain person according to His holy Will. Only a short time elapsed when Brother Faye went to Father Dzierozynski and said, "Father, please tell that person he is not to become a Jesuit. This will be a disappointment to him, but add for his consolation that the far West will one day resound with the praises of the Children of Mary."<sup>18</sup> The decision was made, and Father Donaghoe returned to his pastoral work. As a part of this work he had always considered the religious education of the children an extremely important item. To carry this out, he had formulated definite plans. The actual working out of the plans, however, had been denied him, as workers with sufficient training were not available. Upon witnessing the efficient work of the Sisters in the Sunday school, the thought arose in his mind, "Could he not with these auxiliaries or-

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 28.



ganize a religious community and carry out his views for the training of the young?"<sup>19</sup>

This was another big problem, and once again Father Donaghoe sought advice from his director, Father Dzierozynski, S.J. In talking over the plans Father Donaghoe mentioned that he would like the Sisters to be specially devoted to the Blessed Virgin conceived without sin, and immediately his confessor replied, "Let us both have recourse to her." After a long period of prayer, in which both these holy men begged the Blessed Mother to obtain for them light to know God's will, and strength to follow it, Father Dzierozynski touched the shoulder of Father Donaghoe and said, "Take up your cross, and stand by your Mother. Stay with the children of Mary."<sup>20</sup> Determined from that moment on that he was the heaven-appointed guide of the Sisters, Father Donaghoe decided to stand by them, no matter how great the sacrifices this would require of him.

The decision made, Father Donaghoe told the Sisters that he believed they were called by God to cooperate with him in the establishment of a new institute. It took very little to persuade them of this, for they recognized their vocation, and "happily surrendered their guidance into the hands of one who had received light and grace for that purpose."<sup>21</sup> Father Donaghoe sought permission for the new institute from Bishop Kenrick, who, after due consideration, consented to the new foundation with Father Donaghoe as its director. The Sisters, with Mary Francis Clarke as the superior, organized themselves into a community under the rule drawn up for them by Father Donaghoe. On November 1, 1833, after the pronouncement of their act of consecration and the reception of Holy Communion, they re-

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

ceived a special religious habit and the title of Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which title was changed ten years later at the behest of Bishop Loras of Dubuque to read, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary,<sup>22</sup> and so by the acts just mentioned, these young women became an organized body of religious whose lives were to be devoted exclusively to the education of youth. For ten years they labored in Philadelphia, making use of every means at their disposal to fit themselves for every phase of the work, in order to increase their standard of efficiency. In those ten years they conducted the parochial school in St. Michael's parish as well as an academy for boarders and day pupils at the corner of Second and Phoenix (now Thompson) Streets.

In April, 1834, the happy four were joined by Rose O'Toole, who had been detained in Dublin to settle her father's estate. In May, 1835, due to the increased number of pupils, they found it necessary to procure more room for teaching purposes so Father Donaghoe rented two houses on Second Street, nearer to St. Michael's church. Into one of these houses the school was transferred and into the other the Sisters moved. They retained for their own use only as much of the building as was absolutely necessary for them; the rest was devoted to school purposes. This remained the home of the Sisters until September 29, 1838, at which time they moved into the new convent which had been built for them by Father Donaghoe. It was this new convent which became the Congregation's first novitiate and it was here that Sister Mary Margaret Mann took up her duties as Mistress of Novices. During the period spent in Philadelphia, the community membership was increased from four to nineteen.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

In 1841, John E. Norman, a young ward of Father Donaghoe in Philadelphia, went to Dubuque to seek a fortune in the lead mines located there. Instead of fortune he found failure in the mining business and so sought employment as an organist in the cathedral and as a teacher in the boys' school connected with the church. Frequently Mr. Norman spoke of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin to Bishop Loras, who soon applied to Father Donaghoe for some of the Sisters to aid him in the missionary work of his vast diocese, which he described as "the poorest diocese in the land." The Sisters were interested, for this would give them an opportunity to share in labors like those of the great Jesuit, Father De Smet, who had visited them in the early autumn of 1842 and by his enthusiasm and ardor for Indian missionary activity had enkindled theirs.<sup>23</sup>

After long deliberation and much prayer, the invitation of Bishop Loras was accepted. Sister Mary Margaret Mann was appointed superior of the band of five which was chosen to open the new mission in Dubuque. When all preparations for the journey were completed, the five Sisters, accompanied by Father Donaghoe, called on Bishop Kenrick of Philadelphia to bid him farewell and to receive his blessing. Here they met his brother, the newly-appointed Bishop of St. Louis, the Right Reverend Peter Kenrick, who had offered Mass for them the last day they were in Dublin. It was a strange coincidence to meet him once again at another critical turning point in their lives. The new Bishop, en route for St. Louis, traveled most of the way with the Sisters and Bishop Loras, who, on his return from the Council at Baltimore, had stopped in Philadelphia to bring the Sisters into the wilds of Iowa. They set out on June 5, 1843 and reached Dubuque on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 23, 1843.

---

The journey from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was by rail and canal,

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

and Pittsburgh was reached only after five days of continuous travel. Here the Sisters of Charity in charge of the Orphan Asylum entertained the traveling Sisters over Sunday. On Monday, the Sisters and their companions embarked on a steamboat whose destination was Keokuk; en route, they stopped at Louisville for a day. There all the Catholics who were on board were invited to the cathedral by Bishop Flaget to celebrate the solemn feast of Corpus Christi. After the religious ceremonies, the rest of the day was spent with the White Cap Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in their lovely Presentation Academy. The Annals note that the boat stopped at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where Bishop Kenrick disembarked to be welcomed by some of the clergy of his new diocese before going to St. Louis to assume full responsibilities.<sup>24</sup>

When St. Louis was finally reached, the Sisters made the acquaintance of Sister Mary Angela Hughes, a Sister of Charity and the sister of Bishop Hughes of New York, Father Donaghoe's bosom friend. Plans to stay in St. Louis for a few days were changed, as Bishop Loras desired to get back to his flock in Dubuque as soon as possible, so the long journey was resumed. \* At Keokuk, an up-river packet to Dubuque was boarded, which brought the Sisters to Dubuque without mishap of any consequence on June 23, the feast of the Sacred Heart.

On July 5, 1843, St. Mary's Academy for day pupils was opened in Dubuque. Shortly after the arrangements for day pupils were completed, so many entreaties were made by parents to have the Sisters take their children as boarders, that these accommodations were prepared, and the school was rapidly filled with girls from the best families around Dubuque. The Bishop was so pleased with the work of his five new missionaries that he

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

resolved to invite the entire community of Sisters to Dubuque, as well as Father Donaghoe. Upon issuing this invitation, Bishop Loras offered Father Donaghoe the position of vicar-general. So well did the Bishop plead his cause, that Father Donaghoe, after much prayerful consideration, determined to cast his lot as well as that of his spiritual children among the prairies of the West. The school in Philadelphia was closed; two postulants remained behind to care for the convent until it could be disposed of, and Father Donaghoe, accompanied by fourteen Sisters (the entire community of Philadelphia) left that city, September 12, 1843 and arrived in Dubuque on October 8.

The school work kept the Sisters busy, but did not prevent them from extending their care to the sick, the afflicted and the Indians who lived in their vicinity. These were times of great hardship and privation for the Sisters. They lived in a log cabin which was far from capable of holding the bite of the strong wintry winds on the outside, but despite all the physical discomfiture endured, complaints were few, if any. On December 8, 1843, Julia Donovan, who had come from Philadelphia as a postulant, was received into the community and given the name of Sister Mary Vincent.

The Novice Mistress was given few opportunities to forget her required duties after leaving Philadelphia, for, on December 8, 1844, two postulants from the West entered the Novitiate. These were Letitia Burke, who became Sister Mary Agnes, and Ellen Hurley, of whom we will hear much under her religious name, Sister Mary Agatha. On the same day the two postulants, who had come to Dubuque to join the others, after the burning of Sacred Heart Academy in Philadelphia, received the religious habit and titles. Mary Baker became known in religion as Sister Mary Lucy, and Elizabeth Sullivan as Sister Mary Bonaventure.

In March, 1846, the novitiate and boarding school of the Sisters were transferred to new buildings at Old St. Joseph's Prairie. This tract of land had been procured by Father Donaghoe as a place for the development of the community when he had first come back to Dubuque in 1845. The Annals narrate an interesting incident relative to its acquirement. Mother Clarke and the Sisters felt that the convent should be located at some distance from the city, so after having offered Mass for their intention, and invoking the Holy Ghost for guidance, Bishop Loras and Father Donaghoe mounted their horses and went out into the country west of Dubuque, in search of land suitable for their needs. As they rode, many desirable spots were seen, but at noon-time, no decision was yet made. The two dismounted about ten miles southwest of Dubuque and in the restful shade began to say their Office. Soon a swarm of bees alighted on Father Donaghoe's hat, which he had thrown on the ground. The two clergymen were attracted by them, and noticed that although the Bishop's hat lay beside Father Donaghoe's, not a bee alighted there. The insects worked industriously, flying in and out, and around the crown of Father Donaghoe's broad sombrero. Father then said, "We will build our Convent here!"<sup>25</sup>

The next step was to procure the land; John Walsh claimed it, though it had not as yet been offered for sale by the government. Mr. Walsh was a fervent and exemplary Catholic, the best mathematician that had ever come to the lead mines, as well as a master at horsemanship. It seems that as he was out on a hunting expedition one day, he was met by a young girl,

whose marvellous beauty and angelic bearing convinced him that he was in the presence of the supernatural. She said to him, "Good Sir, I am Philomena, martyr for Christ; I am come to bring you a message." He listened attentively while she told him that a Community of religious women

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

would come and build their convent here, and she assured him, that through the holy lives and zealous labors of the members, many souls would be saved. She pointed out a tract of land which she would have him hold for their coming. As the girl spoke, the green prairie was occupied by a flock of sheep and lambs of snowy whiteness, with here and there among them, black-robed, human figures, indistinct but evident, while music so heavenly sweet was heard that it moved him to tears...Believing himself honored in the trust confided to him, he claimed the large tract of land...and he held firmly to the idea that Providence had ordained him to keep it for the Nuns who were to come. <sup>26</sup>

It was from this Mr. Walsh, who would accept no price nor conditions until he learned that it was to be secured for a religious community, that Father Donaghoe procured the land.

After attending to the immediate needs of the Community, Father Donaghoe returned to Philadelphia, March, 1844, to make complete arrangements for his departure from that diocese and to dispose of the convent property.

It is interesting to note here that the Community was in Dubuque before the "Riots of '44" although Burns says, "The latter [Sisters of Charity, B.V.M.] remained till their convent was burned by Native American rioters in 1844, when they went to Dubuque."<sup>27</sup>

The following letter written by Father Donaghoe to Bishop Loras brings out clearly the motives which prompted him to take up his residence permanently in Dubuque:

Frederick, Md.,  
August 12, 1844.

My dear Bishop Loras:

I received your kind and affectionate letter of the

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>27</sup>J.A. Burns and Bernard J. Kohlbrenner, A History of Catholic Education in the United States, N.Y., 1937, p. 79.

29th of May on the 30th of July, and with it five other letters from Dubuque. I also received on the 2nd of August from the hands of Bishop Kenrick your favor by Mr. Waples....I shall ever feel grateful to you for the salutary advice as also for the distinction of being made your Vicar General by your letter of May 29th last.

You urge me not to attend to the offers of my worthy friends. I have not done so because I am fully impressed with the conviction that Providence has directed everything relating to me and my poor little Community. Last January I received a letter from Bishop Hughes inviting me to take charge of one of the New York churches, to draw upon him for whatever sum I stood in need of, and to come if possible immediately. Not to delay him in his arrangements I wrote stating that my fixed and determined purpose is to remain with my Community in the West.

When I reached Baltimore, on my way to Philadelphia, I was saluted by Bishop Quarter of Chicago, and found that we had been traveling together from Frederick without knowing it. I spoke then and afterwards in Philadelphia, about my arrangements with Mr. Petiot, by your permission. He urged me to engage myself with him at Chicago. I told him I could not do so. He then offered to make me President of his contemplated college, and wished me to bring my Community there, where, a la mode of the mountains, I could attend to both. My answer was that I was unfitted for the office he proposed, but that for his goodness I would, when I went West, do what I could for him. All this Bishop Hughes approves; I will give you his reasons at another time. Your letter which I received on the 30th of July pleased him; he advises me to accept your proposition if I do not decide in favor of New York. I offered it to God, and proposed to confirm it when I made my retreat at Frederick. There the good and venerable Father told me it appeared to be the providence of God that I should accept. I deem it well to let you know all this. I have only one remark to make of my own, -- the Community brought me to Iowa, it is the cause of my return thither; and to it in prosperity or otherwise will I devote myself, continuing thus I trust in God, all the days of my life.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

28

T.J. Donaghoe

In Dubuque, on August 15, 1845, the members of the Community, then numbering nineteen, took the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, in St. Raphael's cathedral. Upon this occasion, Bishop Loras celebrated



the Mass. Very Reverend Father Donaghoe was present in the sanctuary with the Reverend Father Cretin, who had conducted the preparatory retreat of the Sisters, and who also delivered the sermon.

Prosperity seemed to smile on the Community during its first days at St. Joseph's Prairie. Buildings were erected to care for those students who applied for admission to the school, as the fame of the teaching efficiency of the Sisters spread. But on the night of May 15, 1849, the convent, academy and all the other nearby buildings were entirely destroyed by fire. The Sisters lost everything they possessed. All the furniture, supplies, letters, records, and notes, as well as precious souvenirs, were destroyed. On this fateful night, Father Donaghoe was not at home, but when he returned, it was only to manifest his confidence in God's goodness, and to begin making plans about re-building that which was lost.

In spite of the material adversities suffered by the Community, it prospered in other ways. Faith and heroism conquered all temptations to despair. So many postulants applied for admission that by 1859 it was deemed best to retain all the buildings at St. Joseph's Prairie for the exclusive use of the Community. The academy was transferred from St. Joseph's Prairie to Fourteenth Street Hill in Dubuque, now the site of Loras College. This academy had originated as St. Mary's Boarding School in Dubuque, in 1843 and was the foundation for Clarke College (known for many years as Mount Saint Joseph Academy and College). "Clarke" was the Community's first college for women. The Thirteenth Street school is still used for day pupils, of whom there are at present about three hundred. The Mother house of the Community remained at St. Joseph's Prairie until 1893 when it was brought to its present site at Mount Carmel in Dubuque.

In the period between its origin and 1869, the Community grew in membership from five to one hundred sixty-eight. Twenty schools in the Dubuque diocese were opened and taught by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The prophecy of Brother Faye that the "far West will one day resound with the praises of the Children of Mary" was literally being fulfilled.

The Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose legal title is Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of St. Joseph, Dubuque County, Iowa,<sup>29</sup> are based upon the Rule of St. Ignatius. In the early preparation of these rules Father Donaghoe was ably assisted by the Jesuit Fathers of Frederick, Maryland. It was due to the suggestion of Reverend Father James C. Van Goch, S.J., who gave the retreat at the Mother house in the summer of 1872, that Mother Mary Francis Clarke proceeded to carry out the desires of Father Donaghoe by making application to the Holy See for the sanction and formal approbation of the Constitutions.

After begging God's blessing on this project, and discussing the important matter with her consultors, Mother Clarke wrote the following message to the various missions:

IN HONOR OF THE HOLY FAMILY, JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

In the presence of Almighty God who sees the intention of my soul and who knows the motives that animate me, namely, to promote the glory of God, the salvation of souls and the good of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I give you our Constitutions and Common Rules.

I have written and compiled them almost verbatim from the writings of saintly Father Donaghoe, and have added, according to his spirit, that which death prevented him from finishing. It is my last request and will, that these Constitutions and Rules shall be in future your guide and protection, until high

---

<sup>29</sup>Custom Book of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, p. 11.

ecclesiastical authority shall order otherwise.

May God bless you all, my dear Children. I feel confident that following these Rules, you will reach the End of our Institute, and having imitated Jesus, Mary and Joseph here, you will enjoy their company in Heaven.

I recommend myself to your good prayers, and remain,

Your sincere and most unworthy,

Mother Mary F. Clarke, B.V.M.<sup>30</sup>

--

The Jesuit Fathers Van Goch, Garesone, Coosemans, Koopmans and Lambert lent their valuable assistance to the work. The Constitutions which had been matured by experience and tested by many trials were given to the Jesuit Fathers who prepared them for examination by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. The task of preparing the Latin Copy was assigned to Reverend A.A. Lambert, then a scholastic, and to him the Rector, Father Coosemans, gave the necessary permission to proceed with the work. Father Lambert entered into it heartily and spared neither time nor labor until it was accomplished. Fathers Koopmans, Damen and other members of the Society of Jesus furthered<sup>31</sup> the important step by their assistance and advice.

The Reverend Philip Laurent of Muscatine was invited to become the Postulator for the cause, but he turned this important task over to the Very Reverend Andrew Trevis, a friend of his, who was in Europe for his health. No one could have been more faithful nor persistent in bringing to a happy conclusion the work undertaken than Father Trevis. The proceedings dragged on until 1877 when Mother Mary Francis Clarke was notified on September 19 of the approbation of the Holy See. She also received a formal deed erecting the Community into a Congregation.

---

<sup>30</sup> Doran, In the Early Days, p. 294.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

Final approbation was secured on March 27, 1885, as this letter from the Reverend A.J. Schulte to Mother Clarke states:

American College, Rome,  
March 27, 1885.

At last your long cherished desires have been fulfilled. Your Institute has received final approbation. I sent you a cablegram to that effect last Monday. Out of the seventeen religious Orders of women who have applications to this same effect at the Propaganda, yours is one of the first to receive attention, though some of the others had sent in their<sup>32</sup> application long before yours was received.

The changes that the growth of the Community made necessary in regard to election of officers have been included in the Constitutions that are now in effect in the Congregation. These received final approbation from the Holy See in 1928.

---

<sup>32</sup>

Ibid., p. 345.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HOLY FAMILY CENTER: FIRST CHICAGO FOUNDATIONS.

During the period in which the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary were rapidly spreading their field of labor throughout the diocese of Dubuque, Father Arnold Damen, S.J., urged on by Bishop O'Regan of Chicago, began his apostolate in the Chicago Diocese. In March, 1857, Father Damen selected "the block between Twelfth, May and Eleventh and Austin (Aberdeen) Streets"<sup>1</sup> to be the site of his parish buildings, while the parish boundaries were "Polk Street on the north, the south branch of the Chicago river on the east and south, and practically unlimited space on the west."<sup>2</sup> Father Damen, accompanied by Father Charles Truyens, also of the Society of Jesus, arrived in Chicago on Mary 4, 1857, to take up the work of establishing this new parish, to which was given the very fitting name of Holy Family. The ardor and high ideals which accompanied the founding of this parish may be readily seen by reading the note penned by Father Damen on the back of the paper containing the instructions given him by his superior. "Remember why we go to Chicago, viz., A.M.D.G., for the greater glory of God, the good of religion, the good of souls. Let us then have the best of intentions and often renew them."<sup>3</sup>

It was such zeal as that with which Father Damen was endowed that was required to build up this parish. Father Damen had no money, and, in 1857, due to the Panic, not many of his parishioners had any either, but both

---

<sup>1</sup> Brother Thomas M. Mulkerins, S.J., Holy Family Parish, Chicago, 1923, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Reverend Joseph P. Conroy, S.J., Arnold Damen, S.J., N.Y., 1930, p. 7.

pastor and parishioners, most of whom were Irish, had abundant Faith, and so were trustful of the very generous Providence of God. Father Damen, knowing the diligence with which the Irish had fought for their freedom, and their eagerness to give their children a good Catholic education, of which they themselves had been deprived, put his knowledge to practical use. He made word pictures of his dreams for the benefit of his Irish parishioners. There were descriptions of the large and beautiful church, the well-equipped parish schools, and even a college that they would work out together. Soon his parishioners began to see things as he saw them, and on July 12, 1857, a temporary church was opened, and found to be so much too small for the number of parishioners who flocked to it that, by the end of August, an addition to the temporary church was completed and the corner stone for the permanent Holy Family Church was laid.

No Irishman was given a chance to think that his Johnnie or Mary would be forced to attend the public schools to obtain the education he coveted for his children, for Father Damen had wings added to each side of the temporary church to be used as a school, explaining that these could be used for church services on Sunday as well, and on August 11, classes for girls were begun in one wing and on September 7, classes for boys were organized in the other wing. These boys and girls were taught by Catholic lay teachers, as it was impossible to secure religious teachers then. At this time, St. Patrick's was the only Catholic school on the West side of Chicago, and within the bounds of the parish there was but one public school, the Foster.

As soon as the new church was finished, the old structure was remodeled to be used for class rooms, and was maintained as a school until May, 1864, when it was destroyed by fire. Immediately after the fire the

basement of the new church was fitted up to be used for a school, and plans for the erection of a new school building got underway. With the zeal customary to this parish, all hands worked together and, in January, 1865, the new building was ready for occupancy. This building, large enough to accommodate two thousand pupils, was named Holy Family School and was intended for the exclusive training of boys. Many called this the "Brothers' School" because Brother Martin Corcoran, S.J. and Brother Thomas O'Neil, S.J. were its first teachers. The school opened and Father Andrew O'Neil, S.J. began his duties as head of the Holy Family school system.

As early as March, 1857, even at the time when Father Damen was just settled in regard to the location of his Chicago parish, Bishop O'Regan asked him to bring the Ladies of the Sacred Heart to Chicago. This request was acted upon, and, in 1858, Madame Gallwey and ten other Religious of the Sacred Heart took up their abode in Chicago. At first they lived on Wabash Avenue, outside the parish, but later built a large frame building at Rush and Illinois Streets which was used as a school. It was not until August 20, 1860, that the Religious occupied their new convent on Taylor Street within the confines of the Holy Family parish. To this site, Father Damen had their old frame school building moved, and here the first parochial school exclusively for girls in Holy Family parish was established. Four years later the Religious started an academy and boarding school called The Seminary of the Sacred Heart, which became the foundation of the present Barat College at Lake Forest, Illinois.

Notwithstanding the fact that there were two schools in operation in the Holy Family parish, Father Damen realized that the educational facilities in his parish were not adequate to meet the increasing number of his flock. He knew that more schools would have to be established and that "some un-

failing source of trained teachers must be sought that would meet and supply the continuously increasing demand for more teachers and hold the schools firmly up to a set standard of study."<sup>4</sup> While this problem was in the foremost part of Father Damen's mind, he went on a mission tour through Iowa, where he observed, in various places, the work which was being carried on by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So pleased was he with what he saw that he decided to try to secure these Sisters for his parish school in Chicago. Just when the first invitation was issued by Father Damen is not clearly stated in the Annals of the Congregation, but the following story relative to the invitation is interesting:

Once, when Father Damen gave a Mission in the Cathedral in Dubuque, Iowa, one of the Sisters spoke to Father Damen about a gentleman of the city who had, years before, fallen away from the practice of his religion. Among other bits of information, relative to this case, she said to Father Damen, "Father, I know that if you were only to talk with this gentleman, he would come back to the Church." Father, feeling confident of the gifts given him along this line, said to the Sister, "Just bring him in, Sister, and I'll do the rest." With this, the priest went into the sacristy and Sister went into the yard, just as the gentleman whom she planned to get back into the Church was coming down the street on his way to work in the city. Sister began making gestures as though she were looking for someone in particular, or for something she might have lost. The gentleman greeted her in kindly fashion and asked if she had lost something. Sister replied that she was looking for a boy to take a message to Father Damen in the sacristy. "I'll send in the first boy I meet," he said, but after a

---

<sup>4</sup> Conroy, op. cit., p. 149.



moment's search he returned and said, "Sister, there is no boy in sight; could I help you?" The deed was done; Father Damen met the man, knew from the message that he was the one to convert, and did his part.

The priest was so pleased with the ingenuity used by the Sister to aid him in his missionary work that he is said to have made known his desire to have this community of Sisters, which was so fired with apostolic zeal, to teach for him at Holy Family parish in Chicago.<sup>5</sup>

However, the Community Annals make it clear that an invitation to work in Chicago in Holy Family parish had been sent to Father Donaghoe before February 22, 1867, for a letter of the above date written to Father Donaghoe by Sister Mary Margaret Mann, then missioned at Davenport, Iowa, says:

I thank our Lord and His Blessed Mother that you are well; I feared it would be otherwise. The Jesuit Fathers are here giving a mission. Poor Father Damen's head is as white as yours. I am told that Father Pelamourgues asked to go to France after the mission in his church.

Since I wrote the above, Father Damen has been here. He wants our Sisters, six or nine, to teach a parochial school in Chicago. He will provide for them a house furnished, an oratory and daily Mass, will pay two hundred and fifty dollars a year to each Sister, and if they teach music, embroidery or painting, the income will be their own. Father D. will do all he can for them. He would be glad to get nine Sisters, but is willing to take six for a beginning. He has an understanding with the Bishop about it. Now, dear Father, think of it, and I hope God will direct you. I told Father Damen I would write you all these details. I will get all the Sisters to say the Thirty Days' Prayer for your intention. Will you tell me what you think of it when you write? Father Damen wrote to you on this subject some time ago. I will be glad to hear what you will say to his proposition: I hope it will succeed. Love to dear Mother.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Sister Mary Lambertina Doran, July, 1940.

<sup>6</sup> Doran, In the Early Days, p. 200.

Father Damen's invitation to the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to begin work in Chicago was not their first invitation. As was stated in chapter one, a like invitation issued by Bishop Quarter was refused in 1844. Not daunted by the refusal of Father Donaghoe to accept his earlier invitation, Bishop Quarter tried again in 1845:

In the spring of 1845, Bishop Quarter of Chicago made a second application for our Sisters, and to strengthen his appeal sent his brother, the Very Reverend Walter Quarter, to Dubuque to bring back five Sisters for a foundation in Chicago: but the Sisters could not then be spared. Moreover, Bishop Loras entreated Father Donaghoe to refuse all these flattering invitations <sup>7</sup> until the Dubuque diocese was supplied with teachers.

The following August, 1845, the Sisters made their customary retreat in preparation for the renewal of their vows, but it is interesting to note that on this occasion the Sisters made their renewal publicly, at a High Mass in the cathedral at Dubuque, "thus announcing the establishment of the Institute under the immediate jurisdiction of the Bishop."<sup>8</sup> From that time until 1867 the Dubuque diocese alone had the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as teachers in its schools.

After the first letters and conversations had passed between Father Damen and Father Donaghoe, the two priests began to make arrangements which would make possible the entrance of the Sisters into Chicago. Father Damen then procured a two-story building on Maxwell Street. Originally intended for a chair factory, under Father Damen's direction it was remodeled into a school. In Dubuque, Father Donaghoe discussed the whole problem with Bishop Hennessey, from whom Father secured not only permission but the

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

bishop's hearty approval and blessing for the Community's new enterprise. Father Donaghoe's enthusiasm over the proposed school in Chicago was manifested in his reply to the interesting letter from Sister Mary Margaret above quoted:

The proposition of the Reverend Father Damen pleased me, and as in Lent we will have a retreat in Dubuque given by him and by Father Smarius, the full details will be well weighed and arranged on both sides of the big river. We will pray for God's holy will and benediction. Could your health permit you to give the Chicago mission a start? ... God bless you and give you health to stand at your post.<sup>9</sup>

The rapid-fire correspondence between Father Donaghoe and Father Damen relates the story of St. Aloysius (this was the name given to the girls' school of the Holy Family parish) from the very beginning. On June 21, 1867 Father Damen wrote to Father Donaghoe: "Cannot your Sisters take charge of our schools immediately after the 15th of August. We want at least six or seven teachers to begin with."<sup>10</sup> Again on July 2 he wrote:

The school is ready for your Sisters: we desire very much that three or four Sisters would be here by the 12th of this month to open the school in order to prevent the children from going to the public schools. If we commence about a month before the public schools do, we will secure all our Catholic children. We have now 1000 boys in our school and we should have as many girls whereas we have only 700, but by getting your Sisters I hope that the evil will be remedied. We would like to get nine Sisters, but try to send three or four at once if possible, and let them be good teachers so as to make a good impression, for the first impression is usually the lasting one. I need not say that I have the approbation of our good Bishop.<sup>11</sup>

Now that the Chicago mission was assured for the Community, Father Donaghoe's next task was to gather together the band of Sisters that would make up the first Chicago community. In making the arrangements Father

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

Donaghoe wrote to Father Laurent of Muscatine, Iowa, to ask if Sister Mary Agatha Hurley could be taken from the parish in Muscatine in order to become the first Sister Superior in the new Chicago parish. To this letter Father Laurent, ever a true friend of the Community, replied:

Your letter which was delivered to me by Sister Mary Agatha surprised me but gave me joy on account of the good news it announces. I think that the mission of our Sisters is going to be revealed to them as it was revealed to those of the Visitation. Our Sisters are called to fill a position which no order yet was intended for, and that is, teaching our parochial schools and popularizing Catholicity among the masses. I have watched them here for the last four years, governed very little, criticized everything but not sharply, rather like a kind Aristarchus, and I must render them the good justice that they made themselves be felt here and did good not only among Catholics but also among Protestants, by the standard of the school. They will not depend any more on one diocese, and they will have the Jesuits to guide them, which is saying a good deal. Thus you will be able to say: "I planted, the Jesuits watered, God has given the increase." I think you could not have made a better choice than Sister Mary Agatha for that new place, and I feel assured that in a few years Chicago will speak for itself...<sup>12</sup>

Sister Mary Agatha Hurley and Sister Mary Veronica Dunphy were the first Sisters to go to Chicago, and, since the living quarters for the Sisters were not in readiness for them, Father Damen went to the David Pyne home to try to arrange with Mrs. Pyne to have the Sisters remain in her home until the convent would be ready. In this Father Damen was due to be disappointed, for Mrs. Pyne had everything in the house either packed to take to the family summer home or put away. She, also, was disappointed in not being able to help Father Damen in this emergency but she directed him to the home of James Doran, known in the parish as the "flour and feed man" who lived only a few doors away from the Pyne home. Here Father Damen

---

<sup>12</sup>

Ibid., p. 204.

found Mrs. Doran more than glad to be able to help him and honored to have the Sisters stay in her home, and so, the first two Sisters to come to Chicago took up their temporary quarters in the Doran home.<sup>13</sup>

On August 9, 1867, Father Donaghoe wrote to Sister Mary Agatha in Chicago: "Expect six Sisters: they leave Dubuque on Tuesday morning for Chicago...We must pray even when walking. Take good care of your health. I know Father Damen will do all he can. Inconveniences in commencements are unavoidable."

Sister Mary Agatha kept those at St. Joseph's in Dubuque posted on the events that took place in Chicago and the Sisters so far away from their Community were frequently privileged with letters from Father Donaghoe. On August 12, 1867, he wrote:

Your letter gave pleasure both to Mother Clarke and to me. I trust that your accounts, though not glowing, will satisfy me for my ardent desire to cross the Father of Waters. Neither you nor I can see all the advantages of the Chicago schools for some time, but write me your reflections. I will try to weave and wire them into the interests of our dear Community. Sister Mary Gertrude is lonesome and is sighing for postulants...There is nothing like prayer with hope...May God and our Immaculate Mother bless you and all.<sup>14</sup>

The nine Sisters for whom Father Damen had pleaded were in their new mission before school opened. They were Sister Mary Agatha, Sister Mary Veronica, Sister Mary Angela, Sister Mary Cleophas, Sister Mary Clotilda, Sister Mary Scholastica, Sister Mary Annunciation, Sister Mary Thomas, and Sister Mary Zita, with Sister Mary Agatha as the superior of the flock.<sup>15</sup> These very busy nine were given some assistance, however, before October 22,

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Sister Mary Clementine Pyne, July, 1940.

<sup>14</sup> Doran, In the Early Days, p. 206.

<sup>15</sup> Community Archives, Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa, Pioneer List.

1867, as Father Donaghoe in writing a letter to his children on the missions said, "We now have eleven Sisters in Chicago and 850 pupils in schools of St. Aloysius and St. Stanislaus, with 150 more striving for entrance."<sup>16</sup>

The two additional teachers to arrive before October 22 were Sister Mary Agnes Burke and Sister Mary of the Cross Fitzgerald, while Sister Mary Loretta Moore became a member of the faculty sometime during that first year.

On August 19, 1867, two schools were opened for the girls of Holy Family parish. Five hundred girls, of every possible school age, flocked to St. Aloysius, coming from every section of the parish, but, since Father Damen had seen that the old chair factory would not be adequate to take care of all the girls of his parish, he had a building prepared on West Eighteenth Street to help accommodate the overflow, and so on the same day that St. Aloysius opened, Sister Mary Veronica and Sister Mary Thomas opened school at St. Stanislaus, which became the nucleus of the present Sacred Heart school and parish. One hundred fifty children applied for entrance at St. Stanislaus that day. Sisters at both schools were kept busy, but so interested were they in their labors that complaints of the hardships endured have not been recorded.

Father Damen, knowing Father Donaghoe's anxiety about the Community's success in Chicago, wrote the following encouraging account to him on September 12, 1867:

I am thankful to God, that thus far the work of your good Sisters has been blessed by Divine Providence, although Sister Mary Agatha has been sick all the time. The Sisters have now about seven hundred children, and if we had room, I think that after a while they would have a thousand. We must hope that we shall be able to build a convent school for them. We have now in the parish school two thousand five

---

<sup>16</sup> Doran, In the Early Days, p. 209.

hundred children, boys and girls, and we expect to bring that number up to three thousand. Is it not a glorious work to form so many youthful hearts to virtue, piety and religion! The Sisters are good, humble, and work with great zeal. Thanks be to God.<sup>17</sup>

The convent school which Father Damen mentioned in the above letter soon became a reality. In 1869 the erection of the building at 210 Maxwell Street was begun. Before the year closed, preparations were being made for the removal of the Sisters to this new building and in January, 1870, pupils and Sisters occupied it. In this building the girls of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades as well as the Academic twelve hundred students were in attendance there. However, as time progressed, this section of the city began to grow into an undesirable residence location, and St. Aloysius' buildings were put up for sale. Accommodations for the children were found in the several other schools of the parish, and when the buildings were sold (August, 1900) the Sisters moved into a building just opposite the Holy Family church on Twelfth Street, remaining there until December 17, 1902, when the present convent, 1019 May Street, known as St. Aloysius convent, was made ready for them.

The area of the Holy Family parish was vast, and for this reason many parents objected to sending their children to a school that would be centrally located within the parish limits. Father Damen's school system managed this difficulty by providing primary schools in the various sections of the parish, and to these schools the Sisters made their way each morning from their convent at St. Aloysius. The first of these schools was St. Stanislaus, the history of which will be given under the Sacred Heart parish

---

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

school. The second one to be established was St. Veronica school on Ashland Avenue and Van Horn Street, which was begun in 1873 by the Jesuits of Holy Family parish but was taken over by the secular clergy in 1873 and was soon known as St. Pius school. The Guardian Angel school was opened in 1875 on Forquer Street, and here boys and girls up to third and fourth grades attended school. At its height this school cared for five hundred pupils, but owing to the establishment of the Italian parish, the Guardian Angel school was closed in June, 1903. This building was used not only for school purposes but also for church by the Reverend Paul M. Ponziglione, S.J., to which he called the numerous Italians of the district for divine worship. It was upon this nucleus that the following three Italian parishes were constructed: the Holy Guardian Angel, on Forquer Street near Des Plaines Street, Our Lady of Pompeii on Lytle and McAllister Place, and San Callisto on De Kalb and Leavitt Streets.<sup>18</sup>

St. Joseph's school on West Thirteenth Street, near Loomis, was opened on August 26, 1877. The Ladies of St. Joseph's Home on May Street were the first to take charge of this school, but owing to other pressing duties, these Ladies resigned after a few years in favor of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In its earliest days, St. Joseph's school consisted of four classrooms and an assembly hall. In 1901-1902, it was enlarged and, although the intention was to change the name to "Father O'Neil's Memorial school," it continued to be called "St. Joseph's" until it ceased to be. This intended new name was to have been a tribute to Father Andrew O'Neil who had done so much to promote the welfare of the great educational system of the Holy Family parish.

The fifth and last part of the wide-spread primary parochial system

---

<sup>18</sup>Milkerins, Holy Family Parish, p. 201.



came into being in 1877 when St. Agnes school was opened on Morgan near Fourteenth Street. In its six classrooms were taught as many as six hundred small children at one time. Due to the egression of the parishioners from this locality, this school, like the other branch schools of the Holy Family parish, was closed. From the day of the opening to its close in 1910, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary were the instructors at St. Agnes.

The year 1893 saw the Holy Family schools at their highest peak. Twelve hundred girls were in attendance at St. Aloysius, and in the entire parish about five thousand students were taught in its schools. The expense of maintaining these schools was tremendous, and, as the people of the parish began to move to new parishes outside the old boundaries of the Holy Family parish, ways and means of lessening expenses were sought. In 1896 the Jesuit Fathers determined to begin cutting expenses by closing the high school for girls that had been maintained at parish expense at St. Aloysius. At the same time, a decision was reached to have the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary take charge of the entire parish system of education except that which was maintained by the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Some of the conclusions drawn up at a business meeting of the Jesuits of the Holy Family parish held at St. Ignatius College in 1895 are contained in the following letter written to Sister Mary Hilary, who was then superior at St. Aloysius:

St. Ignatius College  
Aug. 5, 1896

Dear Sister Hilary,

Following is in brief what the Fathers determined upon in their meeting last year;

The plan of reconstruction of the schools is as follows:

1st: To make the Holy Family School the central school for both girls and boys of the more advanced grades, say, from the third or fourth upwards to the eighth included.

2nd: The other schools are to be Primary Schools, each for small boys and girls within the district assigned to them.

### Course of Studies

The course of Studies will be outlined by the Reverend Father who will be prefect of Studies of all the Schools. His aim will be to make the course of studies equal to, if not superior to that of the Public Schools of the City. It will belong to him to draw up examinations for Quarterly written examinations; to see that the school work is up to grade, to judge the efficiency of Teachers; to decide any question with regard to the school that may arise.

### Special Requirements

None but Sisters should teach.

### Spiritual Influence

It is expected that the very fact of the Sisters taking charge of all the classes of both boys and girls will exercise great spiritual influence, especially on the boys.

The present plan contemplates only what is of strict necessity for the common school grades of our parish. Should the parish be financially able to provide Kindergarten and High School grades, such grades will be provided for in due time...

Yours sincerely in Christ,

James Hoeffler, S.J.<sup>19</sup>

In order that Mother Mary Cecilia would be able to make provisions for the carrying out of the above decisions of the Jesuit Fathers, Father Hoeffler wrote to her in Dubuque on July 5, 1896. He said:

19

Letters Relative to Schools, Mother General's Office Files,  
Mother House, Dubuque, Iowa.

Rev. Dear Mother,

Though we have not succeeded as yet in selling the Maxwell St. property (but hope to do so soon), we propose to carry out the rest of our school-plan notwithstanding, i.e., to put your Sisters in charge of the Holy Family school for advanced boys and girls.

The good Sisters will have to continue living at Maxwell St. until we sell and build the residence, which we ought to do before winter.

As far as I have been able to calculate from the attendance of children during the past year, we shall probably have 1600 children in the schools next September. And consequently we shall need at least 32 Sisters to teach, probably 34, but for the present we might as well fix the number at 32. Most of them will, of course, teach the lower grades. We cannot well determine what number of higher grades we shall have to put in the Holy Family School; but it will probably be 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades--of boys and girls--so that the other schools will go as high as the 4th grade. The arrangement of grades will be perfected in Sept., as soon as we can see what we have in the schools. At present we can only fix on the number of Sisters necessary for the opening of Schools, and as you desired me to let you know, I write this as a Memorandum for you. Please pray for me. 20

These changes were made, and the results were seen in the increase of students at the Seminary of the Sacred Heart, but the Religious could not take care of the number that applied to them for high school work. This being the case, those students who otherwise would have continued their high school under the direction of the Sisters at St. Aloysius were forced to attend public high schools. The boys found no difficulty, however, as they continued their studies after completing the eighth grade, at St. Ignatius High School.

Many interesting events took place in those early days in Holy Family parish. Entire families would come out to attend the exhibitions of the

students from the various schools. Father Conroy, in his Life of Damen, gives accounts of these most exciting programs, where Mary and John pleased their fond parents by answering for the public the questions in Catechism and Church History that the good Father O'Neil would propose to them. There are also incidents given to indicate that the Holy Family youth was not always infallible in his religious pronouncements.

The closing exercises of the parish schools lasted a week. The program at each evening exercise would consist of some or all of the following types of activity: dramas, dialogues, farces, declamations and concert recitations, mimic and cadet drills, vocal and instrumental music, tableaux, and calisthenics. Besides the conferring of diplomas, there were many medals awarded for various accomplishments of the young students, among them being: Medals for good conduct (merited usually by one), Christian Doctrine, Church History, United States history, geography, arithmetic, grammar, reading, drawing, perfect attendance, and for constant application to study.

21

The manner of determining the winner of the medal was by lot. The very fact that so many merited each of the above-mentioned awards speaks a great deal for the efficiency of the schools. Much of this efficiency was due to the systematic organization of the Holy Family schools; in fact, these were the pioneer schools not only in Chicago, but in the whole United States to operate under a completely organized system. Here, those who later became interested in unifying the work of the Catholic schools were able to find a model upon which to pattern a diocesan school system. Today the Archdiocesan system has been so well developed in Chicago that it would

<sup>21</sup> Mulkerins, Holy Family Parish, pp. 441-442.

be hard to prove one parochial school better than another, or that Chicago parochial schools "yield in general efficiency to any schools anywhere."<sup>22</sup>

An article published in the Chicago Post and Mail, 1876, furnishes interesting data concerning Catholic schools of Chicago in general and the Holy Family parish schools in particular. It says in part:

Though differing from the common schools in many details, yet these very differences form, not merely an interesting field of study, but one pregnant with suggestions of improvement in the public school system, now so boasted of by educational men...These schools are not strictly free, and yet no one, by reason of poverty is debarred from the educational privileges there afforded. The children of parents, whose pocket-books are of ordinary length, are kindly relieved of from fifty cents to a dollar a month, according to the studies taught them. Children whose parents are not able to shoulder this tax, are allowed to pursue their studies side by side with the others and are charged no tuition...The estimate based on years of careful observation and practical experiments shows that under the parochial system the Catholics all educate their children at the rate of \$5.50 a year...<sup>23</sup>

These schools are generally in session eleven months in the year...The course of study is generally such as will give the student a thorough mastery of all the branches as taught in the graded schools, with the addition of a complete course in bookkeeping, and commercial forms and law for the boys and instruction in needle work for the girls. Considerable attention is also paid to music, both vocal and instrumental. Of course, as is well understood, much attention is paid to religious instruction, Bible History being quite a prominent part of the course, and the knowledge of sacred history possessed by some of the younger pupils would put to shame that often displayed by the preachers in the pulpits of other denominations.<sup>24</sup>

The basic curriculum of the four R's has remained in Catholic schools from the beginning, for the general principles of Catholic education do not

---

22

Conroy, Arnold Damen, p. 153.

23 "The cost per pupil in Chicago public schools in 1870 was \$24.46." Bessie Louise Pierce, A History of Chicago, N.Y., 1940, II, p. 513.

24 Quoted in Holy Family Parish, by Milkerins, pp. 432-436.

change. Yet through the years, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary have adopted all the general educational ideals and practices that would help to keep high standards in their schools. Sisters, who were in Chicago in the last century, have always spoken with pleasure about the numerous visits to the Chicago Normal School, as well as to classes in public schools, which they made on holidays, in order to make sure that no new worthwhile method might escape them. There were no formal summer schools conducted at that time to which they might go, but once a good plan was worked out it became the property of the Community. As early as 1902, the Sisters of this Congregation assembled at set places during the summer, in order to discuss the most efficient methods of presenting the various school topics. They were quick to see the value in a new method, and not too hesitant to employ it in their schools--an example is found in the promptness with which the Palmer system of writing was adopted in all of the schools of the Congregation, just after the turn of the century.

Today, under the direction of the Community's supervisors of schools, constant application of the best methods is carried out in all the schools under the direction of these Sisters, not only in Chicago, but throughout the United States. These schools have kept pace with the current progressive tendencies to recognize individual differences as aids in determining methods. Yet, attentive to the warning of the Community's foundress, the Sisters regard "the training of the will and establishing of character as of far greater importance than the mere acquiring of knowledge."<sup>25</sup> With this end in view, religion remains the hub around which all the work in the schools is correlated, for without this,

---

<sup>25</sup> Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dubuque, Iowa, 1928, p. 77.

Catholic schools would have no reason for being.

Present day advances in all the Chicago schools are recorded in the Report of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago for the year 1939, which states:

During the year 1939-1940 considerable progress was made in the improvement of teaching methods through the following means:

- I. Classroom supervision.
- II. Individual and group conferences.
- III. Introduction of new teaching techniques.
- IV. Diagnostic testing program.

Changes in the course of study in the past few years indicate that emphasis is being moved from formal to socialized activities as is indicated in this small portion of the Archdiocesan report just quoted:

In its general outline, this course of study follows the latest and most progressive trends in language teaching. There is a radical departure both in content and approach. The content is based upon the theory of social utility, and the approach is strictly functional. The course is characterized by such latest developments in language teaching as complete informality, the supplanting of rote lesson learning with individual and group activities, and transition from mere analysis, classification, and meaningless drill on rules to the type of exercises that compel expression or functional application of grammatical techniques.<sup>26</sup>

An interesting comparison is furnished in the partial list of past and present day text books used in the Chicago Catholic elementary schools, which is appended to this chapter.

Practical lessons in the duty of the more fortunate to look after those who have received fewer things in the way of wealth and favors were given to the children of Holy Family parish. The custom was to invite the

---

<sup>26</sup>"Report of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago for the year 1939-1940," The New World, January 3, 1941, p. 7.

orphans from St. Joseph's Home to one of the Holy Family schools for the feast of the Holy Innocents and to provide entertainment and other things of worth for them. The following is an account of one of these very enjoyable days as told by a pupil of St. Aloysius school. This appeared in the Sunday School Messenger in the form of a composition.

Reception of the Orphans at St. Aloysius School,  
December 28, 1871

---

After months of preparation and eager waiting, the much-wished-for day arrived. The weather was intensely cold; but still, little children laden with bundles and baskets, continued to arrive until the spacious hall of St. Aloysius' School was crowded. It was the anniversary of the massacre of the Holy Innocents--a day to be remembered with sorrow, when the cruel edict was issued by Herod, to slay so many helpless little ones.

But very different were the actions on this day; for we sought, as far as possible, to atone for the cruelty of the tyrant, by helping God's chosen ones--the orphans. The orphans also looked forward with pleasure to this day of meeting, although it revived memories buried in their hearts--the parting with their parents.

Led by the Juvenile Band, the orphans accompanied by their good mothers (the Sisters of St. Joseph) proceeded to St. Aloysius School where they were met by the kind-hearted Rev. A. O'Neil, S.J., under whose guiding care the children of the parish save, yearly, about one thousand dollars for orphans and heathen children, who, in China are cast by unnatural parents to be eaten alive by starving animals. On arriving, many hymns were sung in a creditable manner by the orphans, and the choir of St. Aloysius' School, the Band discoursing music during the intermissions. Two orphan girls delivered very pleasing addresses in a manner quite unlooked for, as the speakers seemed to be very young. The school children, in good order, passed up the aisle and handed their contributions to Mother Joseph, who sat ready to receive them, then passing into a side room where a miniature stable had been constructed, in the manger of which lay a wax representation of the Babe of Bethlehem, with the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph at His head, surrounded by Magi, shepherds and holy women, all bearing presents for the new born Savior.



The star which had guided the shepherds was also represented. The children then returned to their places, listened to more delightful singing, and returned home well pleased with their morning visit, and promising themselves that the next year would not fail to see them there again. The orphans were no less delighted, for though owing to the intense cold, the attendance was limited, when compared to other occasions, the proceeds were much greater than they expected, amounting to about \$500. All considered the day well spent, and returned home many degrees happier than they had anticipated.<sup>27</sup>

As has been said previously, Sacred Heart parish had its beginning in the Holy Family parish, when, as early as March, 1865, Father Damen had a one-story frame building erected on the property donated to him for the purpose. This was located on West Eighteenth Street (then known as Evans Street). In this two-room building, Misses Donnelly, Ghent, and McGuire taught the boys and girls of the vicinity until that day in August, 1867, when Sister Mary Veronica and Sister Mary Thomas took charge at St. Stanislaus school. It was but a very short time until they were assisted by Sister Mary Clotilda, who took charge of the small girls, while Sister Mary Thomas taught the boys and Sister Mary Veronica worked with the older girls. The "Branch School," as it was familiarly called, continued to grow and prosper. In 1868 an addition was made to the frame structure and here on New Year's Day, 1869, Father Damen celebrated the first Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ever said in what is now Sacred Heart parish.<sup>28</sup>

In 1869, Fathers Oakley and Van Goch organized the Holy Angels Sodality and Father Oakley began to offer the Holy Sacrifice each Sunday in the enlarged St. Stanislaus chapel. The congregation grew and in 1871 two Sunday Masses became a necessity and by 1872 four Masses and evening services were available to it. This year also marked the building of a rectory for the

<sup>27</sup> Sunday School Messenger, Vol. V, 1872, p. 44, published by the Holy Family parish Sunday School Association. (January 10 issue)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Vol. XIX, 1886, p. 289.

Mulkerins, Holy Family Parish, p. 428, states that Rev. Dominick Niederkorn, S.J. offered Sunday and Holy Day Masses here from 1865 on.

pastor and his assistance, which was located next to St. Stanislaus school and chapel. At this juncture, St. Stanislaus was separated from the mother parish, Holy Family. Its limits were fixed to extend to the Burlington Railroad tracks on the north, Throop Street on the west, the Chicago River on the south and east. In 1872 Father Schultz, S.J. took charge of the St. Stanislaus school, and in 1874 Father Nussbaum was given charge of the boys in the parish school. After the laying of the corner stone for the new church, the school began to be called the Sacred Heart Parish School.

In 1873 the Sisters moved from St. Aloysius convent into the convent in Sacred Heart parish. Since 1867, the Sisters who taught in the Sacred Heart parish school had traveled back and forth from St. Aloysius each day. Their trip was made by way of Maxwell and Halsted Streets. In fine weather they took the prairie path, cutting across lots, but, as they were obliged to make the trip in all kinds of weather, they naturally sought the best route. Old residents remember to have seen the Sisters making their way the best they could through the snow, sometimes one to two feet deep, and over drifts six feet high. It must be borne in mind that there were no street cars on Halsted Street--hence no snow plows, no streets cleared, no streets paved, no sidewalks, except in spots, and should one wish to reach such sidewalks as there were, it was an additional labor, adding also to the distance of the journey. In fair weather pedestrians preferred the street, but in wet weather they were obliged to take the sidewalk, for what was called a street was but a mud-hole. At Sixteenth Street, or what was then called Rebecca Street, pedestrians would be halted at times for five, ten, or fifteen minutes to permit long lines of freight trains to pass or to enable the trainmen to complete their switching. After crossing the tracks they would be confronted, in wet weather, with mud

and water, so that in order to enable the Sisters to cross the ditches and mud-holes, some of the devoted boys would carry planks and improvise walks and bridges.<sup>29</sup> Sister Mary Veronica was the first superior, of whom Father Damen said, "It was Sister Mary Veronica who built up Sacred Heart parish." In July, 1874, the Sisters moved again, into the house prepared for them right next to the church, and in 1876, Father Nussbaum became the director of the parish school and remained at this important post until the Father Provincial, Father Higgins, in 1879, made arrangements to have the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary take full charge in the parish school. This meant that they would then teach the boys as well as the girls.

The old school building was torn down in May, 1879, and, on the same site, a new brick structure was erected. This was 50 by 100 feet, and was ready for occupancy on October 1, 1879. It is in this building that the Sisters of Charity continue to teach in Sacred Heart parish today. They still live in the convent that was built for them in 1883. The school today, however, is but a shadow of its former size. An account of the Catholic Educational Exhibit of 1893 states that there were nine hundred seventy-five students in the grammar, high and commercial departments at Sacred Heart.<sup>30</sup> The Catholic Directory for 1940 gives three hundred-forty as the present enrollment, with twelve Sisters teaching there.

Much effort was put forth by all Catholic schools in Chicago to make the Exhibit for the World's Fair of 1893 a success. According to the report of the work displayed, it was not in vain, for, although in the educational exhibit there was work from the schools of France, England,

---

<sup>29</sup> Mulkerins, Holy Family Parish, p. 429.

<sup>30</sup> James Thompson, ed., Diamond Jubilee of the Archdiocese of Chicago, 1920, p. 375.

Ireland, Africa, and from every state in the Union, Professor Peabody, the chief of the Liberal Arts Department of the World's Fair, declared that the "Catholic Educational Exhibit of Chicago was the gem of his department."<sup>31</sup>

The year 1896 saw very much the same type of reorganization in the Sacred Heart parish school as was put into effect in Holy Family parish, as the following correspondence will indicate:

Sacred Heart Church  
49 W.<sup>a</sup> 19th St.  
Chicago, July 14, 1896

Sister Mary Cecilia:

After talking over the matter with the Sisters, we have come to the conclusion that we will try to combine classes, so as to get along with 6 Sisters for the boys and 6 Teachers for the girls...We will drop the Academic Course...If there is anything else you wish to know, inform me and I will answer at once. Pray for

Yours in Dno,

James A. Dowling, S.J.

James A. Dowling, S.J.

Dear Rev. Father:

Your letter has been received, and Sister Mary Emeliana has been here and is gone again. I sent with her for your signature the form of contract we use for parochial schools. Sister tells me that you are retaining Miss McQueeny simply because we wish it, but, Father, we much prefer to have a Sister in her stead.<sup>32</sup>

For several years the school and parish continued to flourish, but, in 1905, with the change of population peculiar to the growth of a large city, the Sacred Heart parish went into a period of decline, and gradually the school declined with it. Attempts at rejuvenation were made when the

<sup>31</sup> Mulkerins, Holy Family Parish, p. 439.

<sup>32</sup> Letters Relative to the Schools, Community Files in Mother General's Office, Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa.

parish celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1922. General renovations and improvements appeared, both in the convent and school buildings, at this time. Co-education was begun in 1928 and in 1931 the entire parish was taken over by the secular clergy of the Archdiocese.

The old Holy Family school building is no more, but the Sisters of Charity and the Jesuits still work among the people living within the environs of the parish. Today the school numbers three hundred-twenty students with twelve Sisters on the faculty. Much of the glory of the place has faded, but the work of the faithful Sisters, who spent their entire energies in teaching and in other works of mercy, continues. New members have been imbued with their spirit of service, loyalty and devotion, and have carried on the work in many other parishes in Chicago and throughout the United States. The first name on the long list of candidates for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Sacred Heart school and parish is the name of Mary Kane, Sister Mary Isabella, who in 1919 became the Mother General of this Community, and while serving in this capacity, Mother Mary Isabella did much to further education in Chicago by the erection of The Immaculata High School and Mundelein College, on the North side.

In an article published in the New World, April 14, 1900,

Mr. William Onahan sums up the work of the Sisters in the Holy Family parish:

The introduction of the Sisters of Charity of the B.V.M. was one of the happiest events for Catholic education in this parish and city. This wonderful community seemed to possess, from the beginning, a special fitness and aptitude for the task of parochial school work, into which they entered with the greatest enthusiasm and for which the Sisters have demonstrated the highest capability.

Perhaps the best and most touching evidence of this is to be seen every Sunday morning in the 4000 children of both sexes assembled at Mass, in the great church, under the guidance of the devoted Sisters. To see that throng of children, thus crowding the sacred edifice, is an inspiration; and to hear the chorus of sacred anthems, swelling from this youthful throng during Mass, is calculated to excite the emotions of awe and admiration in hearts otherwise insensible to religious influence.

Indeed, the Jesuit parochial schools have long been an example and an incentive for other parochial schools of the city. They would not suffer, it is safe to say, by comparison in any particular with schools of the highest rank anywhere, whether public or parochial, nor have the Sisters hesitated to invite such comparisons at any time, whether in system, method or results. And this high standard has been reached only by the faithful and painstaking efforts and labors, as well as the superior capability of the devoted Sisters.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>Quoted by Mulkerins, Holy Family Parish, p. 426.

## A P P E N D I X

A partial list of the text books that have formerly been used in the parochial elementary schools of Chicago. . .

### RELIGION:

The Baltimore Catechism  
Advanced Catechism, Rev. Thomas J. O'Brien  
Benziger's Bible History  
Gilmour Bible History.

### GEOGRAPHY:

Rand, McNally  
Atwood  
Sadlier  
Butler

### READERS:

McBride Catholic Series  
Shields  
Lakeview Classics  
McGuffey

### AMERICAN HISTORY:

Lawler, Thomas B., Essentials of American History

### ARITHMETIC:

Dubb's, Arithmetical Problems  
Ray's, New Practical Arithmetic  
Milne, Wm. J., Standard Arithmetic  
Milne, Wm. J., Mental Arithmetic

### GRAMMAR:

Gould-Brown, The Institutes of English Grammar  
McNichols, John P., S.J., Fundamental English  
Hoenshel, Advanced Grammar  
Maxwell's Grammar

### SPELLING:

Hunt's Speller

## LIST OF ADOPTED TEXTS 1940-1941

RELIGION:

A New Approach to Religion (Schorsch-Dolores)  
 Grades 1 to 8  
 (Published by the Archdiocese of Chicago School Board)  
 Baltimore Catechism No. 1 . . . Grades 1 to 4  
 Baltimore Catechism No. 2 . . . Grades 5 and 6  
 Missals and small New Testaments are to be  
 used in the upper grades as indicated in the  
 Course of Study in Religion.

### GEOGRAPHY:

Social Geography Series (Branom & Ganey)  
William H. Sadlier, Inc. Grades 4 to 8

**HISTORY:**

American History	. . .	Grades 7 and 8
Macmillan Company		
Furlong's "The Old World and American History"		Grade 6
Furlong's "Pioneers and Patriots of America"		Grade 5
Ganey's "Chicago--A Study for Fourth Grade"		Grade 4
Sister Maria's "Heroes and Holidays"		Grade 3
William H. Sadlier, Inc.		

ENGLISH:

Essentials of Everyday English      Grades 1 to 6  
Laidlaw Brothers, Inc.  
Jeschke, Potter, Gillet's "Better English,  
Higher Book"      . . .      Grades 7 and 8  
Ginn and Company

**MUSIC:**

The World of Music Series . . . Grades 2 to 8  
Ginn and Company

**SPELLING:**

Archdiocese of Chicago Spellers      Grades 2 to 8  
(Published by the Archdiocese of Chicago  
School Board)

**READING:**

Elson Junior Literature, Bks. 1 and 2  
Cathedral Basic Readers . . . Grades 7 and 8  
Scott, Foresman, and Company Grades 1 to 6

**ARITHMETIC:**

Standard Service Arithmetic      Grades 3 to 8  
Scott, Foresman, and Company



LIST OF ADOPTED TEXTS 1940-1941  
(continued)

**CIVICS:**

Civics Study Book . . . Grade 8  
(Published by Archdiocese of Chicago School Board)

\* \* \* \* \*

## LIST OF RECOMMENDED TEXTS 1940-1941

### BIBLE HISTORY:

Grades 2, 3, and 4	.....	Bible Stories
	Benziger Brothers	
Grades 2, 3, and 4	.....	Bible Stories for Children
	Schwartz, Kirwin, Fauss	
Grades 5 and 6	.....	Bible History
	Benziger Brothers	
Grades 7 and 8	(No Bible or Church History text is needed; the Course of Study in Re- ligion for Grades 7 and 8 contains the Bible and Church History material)	

**ENGLISH:**

For the Children  
Poems for the Grades, William H. Sadlier, Inc.  
For the Teacher  
English Experience Series, Rand McNally Company  
English Activities Series, The American Book Company

LATER PAROCHIAL FOUNDATIONS

Convinced that a body of youth educated with Christian principles is the backbone of a strong and virulent Catholicity, many of the clergy and hierarchy of Chicago looked with satisfaction upon the work being accomplished by the small band of Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, not only in the Holy Family parish schools in Chicago, but also in schools throughout Iowa, and determined that the children of their respective parishes should have the same type of instruction. The result was that, as fast as it was possible to procure recruits and train them as religious and as teachers, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary accepted invitations from various pastors, and so spread their influence over a much larger area of Chicago.

The first of the invitations to be accepted, outside of the Holy Family parish in Chicago, was extended to the Congregation by Father Thomas Edwards of Annunciation parish, which had begun as out-mission from St. Columbkille's under the direction of Father Thomas Burke who, in 1866, after organizing the parish, began the erection of the first church and rectory which served as a nucleus for all further building in the parish. Although need for Catholic training for the children was felt even at this time, it was impossible to procure Sisters, and so Mr. John Sexton gathered together many of the children in the vicinity for instruction and thus began the first Annunciation parish school. It was not until October, 1871,<sup>1</sup> that

---

<sup>1</sup> Date given in the Community Files at Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa. 1872 is the time named for the opening of Annunciation School by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Thomas Harmon, History of Annunciation Parish.

the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary first went into the parish to begin work in Annunciation parish school. There were four hundred pupils under the direction of the following pioneer Sisters: Sister Mary Angela, Sister Mary Eusebia and Sister Mary Sophia.<sup>2</sup>

Many Irish families moved into the flourishing Annunciation parish and the steady growth of the school necessitated continued additions to the faculty. Housing conditions for the Sisters demanded attention, and in 1887 Father McShane's dream of a four story brick convent became a reality; in 1905, his plans for the present school and hall were carried out. The next year more than eight hundred pupils gathered together within the walls of the new school "to learn the words of wisdom from the Sisters of Charity, B.V.M., their very capable teachers."<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after the completion of the school, an influx of Italians and Polish began, the Poles building a church of their own. Many Irish families moved further north. By 1910 only four hundred of the former one thousand families lived within the boundaries of Annunciation. By 1916, there were only one hundred and fifty. A decrease in the school resulted, but about 1926, many of the Polish Catholics living within the parish area began to make use of the parish school, and with this inoculation of new material, the school's decline was checked, so that now, in 1940, there is a school enrollment of four hundred eighty-six pupils under the direction of thirteen Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>4</sup>

Annunciation has been fruitful soil for the growth of religious vocations. At least ninety Annunciation girls have given up their all to follow

<sup>2</sup>Community Archives, Pioneer List.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Harmon, Church of the Annunciation, 1916, n.p.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., n.p.

Christ, and seventy of them are Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Among the lists of names, one may find that of Mary Magdalen Tuffy,<sup>4</sup> who today, as Mother Mary Gervase, guides and directs this wonderful body of religious teachers.

The separation of Sacred Heart parish from that of Holy Family followed close upon the opening of the Annunciation school. With the erection of the Sacred Heart convent the third separate mission unit in Chicago was made for the Sisters. At the same time, the fourth mission was in a state of formation, for a group of Sisters made its way daily from St. Aloysius convent in Holy Family parish to St. Veronica's school, which was erected on Van Horn and Paulina Streets. This foundation was a Jesuit out-mission from Holy Family until 1874, when the secular clergy took it over and it became known as St. Pius parish. In 1875, its first pastor, Father Hugh McGuire, procured a band of Sisters for his school. Until a convent could be provided near the school, the Sisters continued to travel daily from Holy Family on the only available type of transportation, "a springless, comfortless omnibus."<sup>5</sup> Since this trip was very hard on the Sisters, the need for a convent within the parish became imperative, so a small cottage near the school was rented for them. The first Sisters to enjoy the comforts of the new convent were Sister Mary Angela, superior, Sister Mary Callista, Sister Mary Georgina, and Sister Mary Austin.<sup>6</sup>

As the parish grew in population, the school increased and a group of Brothers of the Holy Cross was secured to take charge of the boys in the parish. This boys' school was conducted in the building next to the old St. Pius school on Paulina and Van Horn, while the Brothers lived in the

---

<sup>5</sup> Golden Jubilee Booklet, St. Pius Parish, 1924, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Community Archives, Pioneer List.

rear of a building that faced Paulina and Eighteenth Streets. This arrangement held but a short time. The Brothers withdrew and the Sisters were given charge of the boys as well as the girls in the parish school.

Among the papers relative to Chicago schools found in the archives at Mount Carmel, there is an article which not only gives one an insight into the character of Father Hugh McGuire, but also indicates the respect and veneration which the Sisters had inspired in the great man through their earnest and successful labors among his children.\*

An Incident not to be Forgotten in Speaking of the Early Days  
of St. Pius.

---

The dreadful scourge of smallpox appeared there in 1883, and the children of one stricken family, not knowing the danger, concealed the fact and came to school.

Sister Mary Alberic Tench, by her considerate kindness for her little charges, was exposed to the contagion. Fearing these poor children might suffer on their way from school, for the weather was very cold, she fastened their little coats, and in this way contracted the disease which attacked her in a form most malignant and dreadful. A strict quarantine was at once enforced. The school was immediately closed and Father McGuire spared no attention that could secure relief for Sister, but her case was hopeless.

The epidemic was widespread and alarming, and the city officials were especially vigilant to check it. As a measure of precaution the law required certain persons, usually negroes, to prepare for burial the bodies of those who died of this disease. But through the interposition of our noble friend, Father McGuire, what might have been inexpressibly sad, became a tribute of deepest respect and surpassing honor to our Sister, this faithful spouse of Christ. Her poor unsightly body was wrapped in its cerements and placed in the coffin by the anointed hands of a priest of God, by Father McGuire himself, whose fearless insistence upon the reverence due to one consecrated to God by Holy Vows, merits the grateful and lasting remembrance of our Congregation. <sup>7</sup>

In 1884 Father McGuire was transferred to St. James parish. He ever remained a true friend to the Congregation, even though the Sisters of Mercy were in charge of the very successful grade and high school of St. James parish. For one year Father Thomas Galligan was pastor of St. Pius, then Father Francis S. Henneberry took over the pastoral duties. Upon Father Henneberry devolved the erection of a school and convent suitable to the needs of the rapidly developing parish, and with untiring efforts he worked toward these ends. So successful was he that, in 1887, the cornerstone of the building combining convent and school was laid. This edifice was located on the new property on Ashland and Twentieth streets, and by 1893, the new St. Pius church was dedicated with elaborate ceremony. The

Jubilee Book, 1874-1924, states:

The schools meanwhile were keeping pace with the physical and spiritual progress of the parish. Father Henneberry was vitally and intensely interested in the intellectual life of his flock, and left nothing undone to promote its development. He had the enthusiastic and able cooperation of the Sisters, whose reputation and record as educators are firmly established, and second to none. St. Pius was the first school in Chicago to be accredited to the public school without examination of its pupils; and its efficient and popular commercial department--always attracting students from afar--was the second of its kind to be established in the city, the first being that of St. Bridget.

The area of St. Pius parish was so large that, as early as 1878, a branch school, known as St. Malachy, was established on Twenty-fifth Place near Western Avenue. To this school some of the Sisters made their way each day, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was said there on Sundays and holy days of obligation. In 1924 two Masses were said on Sundays and holy days in another school on Leavitt at Twenty-fourth Street. Two Sisters

came to this school and taught the children of the neighborhood rather than have the children travel such distances to a Catholic school or else attend the public schools. In 1901 Reverend P.C. Conway became the pastor at St. Pius, where he remained until 1922. Again the work of the Sisters was encouraged in every possible way and so the schools of this parish maintained the high educational standards which had been established earlier.

In 1922, George Cardinal Mundelein, then Archbishop of Chicago, asked the Dominican Fathers to take over this parish named after the great Dominican Pius V. These religious accepted the invitation and are still in charge of this beautiful church, as well as the Croation church which had been built up in the environs of St. Pius.

The year 1924 saw the Golden Jubilee of the parish, and, at its celebration, Reverend P.C. Conway, former pastor and gifted orator, spoke. In his address, while summarizing the history of the parish, he said:

My dear friends, I would not have you think that priests believe the glory of a parish belongs to them alone. Oh, no, my friends, there are gentle hands constantly weaving night and day the fabric of greatness; there are consecrated minds planning, studying and projecting the heart and mind of today that will be the thinkers and doers of tomorrow. Those angel Sisters, heralds of sanctity and science, virgin mothers of your children's thought and conduct--they are the architects and builders of the moral temples of the heart.

And such have the Sisters of Charity been to St. Pius parish. And because of their heroic and successful accomplishments here, the men and women of St. Pius parish, whenever and wherever they hear the name, Sister of Charity, will, at least in thought, kneel down and worship the pure, and good, and true.<sup>9</sup>

Within the confines of the Old St. Pius parish there are now twelve parishes representing ten nationalities and as many schools, hence the number in attendance at St. Pius has dropped. In 1940 there were three

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

hundred ninety-four pupils enrolled with fifteen Sisters as teachers. The Commercial department reached its peak in attendance in 1906 when there were ninety-eight pupils. This department alone has done sufficient for the young folk of Chicago to make it famous, for since its foundation in 1893 it has sent out two thousand one hundred sixty-seven graduates ready to cope with the situations of the business world. Today, four other Catholic commercial schools have been opened within a radius of eight blocks from St. Pius.<sup>10</sup>

The thirty-second school, the fifth in Chicago to be accepted as a mission for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, was in St. Bridget's parish. To begin the story of this parish in Chicago one must go back to 1847 when the parish was organized as an out-mission of old St. Patrick's, then located at Randolph and Des Plaines. The first temporary chapel was fitted up in an inn in 1850, and Father Michael Donahue became the first resident pastor. During the years between 1847 and 1850 Mass had been said by a visiting priest in one or other of the homes within the parish. Father Donahue purchased the church property, and Reverend Thomas Kelly built the first edifice, but, when he became chaplain for Civil War duty in 1863, Father Grogan took up the labors of St. Bridget's parish, and it was he who procured the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to teach in the parish schools there. These were not the first Sisters to work in this parish. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Corondelet, some years before, had taught the girls but, for some reason, found it impossible to maintain this school and so, from the time of their departure, school was conducted by secular teachers until the Sisters of Charity came in 1876.



Even then the Sisters did not teach the boys. They were looked after by the Christian Brothers who also directed an Industrial Reform school for boys in a neighboring institution.

On the Monday after August 15, 1876, Sister Mary Germanus, Sister Mary Michael, Sister Mary Joachim, Sister Mary Casia, Sister Mary Eulogia, and Sister Mary Claudia began school in St. Bridget's parish with Sister Mary Sebastian as their superior. They started their work in four large classrooms on the top floor of the building, where, until 1877, the boys were taught on the first floor by the Christian Brothers. The Sisters must have done commendable work, for the next year they were given complete charge of the parish school. The first convent was on Archer Avenue just opposite the present convent, but this cottage proved too small to accommodate the number of Sisters required to handle the growing school population. Sister Mary Sebastian suggested that a Rosary be recited daily by the Sisters with the intention of procuring a suitable location for a convent. The prayers were answered, and within a year a large part of the present convent was erected.

Father M.J. Dowling was made pastor in 1883. He saw at once the crying need for more classrooms in the school, and so the building was remodelled, the top floor being partitioned off into smaller rooms and the old auditorium made into rooms for the use of the boys. The arrangement of the rooms brought on another very serious problem for the Sisters and the janitor. Each room was equipped with a stove and each room required the attention of the janitor each morning, and what janitor could begin a fire in twelve separate places at the same time? Tradition<sup>11</sup> has it that the janitor at

---

<sup>11</sup>Annals, St. Bridget Convent, Chicago.

St. Bridget's always began his work in the room for the little folk, and if time ran out before he got around to the rooms of the older boys and girls, they and their teachers had to shift for themselves.

February 1, the patronal feast, was a gala day in the parish while Father Dowling was the pastor. After Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the children assembled in the school hall and presented a program in honor of St. Bridget, after which a bag of goodies-(candy, popcorn, cookies, and a big orange or apple) was distributed to each child. Each Sunday afternoon from two to three o'clock, all the children of the parish were expected to attend Sunday School and to be able to recite the Catechism. The Sisters, of course, conducted these classes, but Father Dowling opened and closed the exercises with a prayer which was always followed by the singing of a hymn. The St. Bridget Sunday School Messenger did much to arouse and maintain interest in these Sunday classes, and, of course, was a source of great joy to the parents of the children whose work appeared therein.

The annual procession which was formed to meet the Archbishop on Confirmation day was an event that was outstanding in the early days at St. Bridget's. The Sisters and children marched down Archer Avenue to Halsted Street to meet His Grace and escort him to the church. Of this event there are some very edifying stories told, but this incident related in the annals of St. Bridget's school is an interesting one:

A young lad of seven years, chosen to welcome the Archbishop, clambered into the open carriage at Halsted Street as the Archbishop and Pastor arrived at that junction. The lad prepared to make his oration but the Pastor was abstractedly talking with His Grace,

so little Shea exclaimed, "Please, Father, be still,  
I have a peeth to peak." <sup>12</sup>

Processions at St. Bridget's in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary were held annually on the first Sunday in May. Clergy, Sisters, altar-boys, boys in Sunday suits and girls in white frocks and veils took part. While the procession was making its way from the school around the block to the Church and through the aisles, the participants sang the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and when all were in the Church the recitation of the Rosary took place. After this, a boy or girl from school would read the Act of Consecration and the entire congregation would make it with him. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament culminated this beautiful devotion. Such crowds assembled for this ceremony that it became necessary to discontinue the procession around the block, but the May devotions are still carried out on the school grounds and in the church.

Upon the death of Father Dowling in June, 1900, Father Michael O'Sullivan became the permanent pastor of St. Bridget's parish. Like his predecessor, he began almost immediately to remodel the school. New hardwood floors and steam heat were installed in the old building, and a new hall with school space included was completed in December, 1901. <sup>13</sup>

Many young girls and boys of the parish desired to enter the business world in Chicago, so, in 1903, a commercial department was added to the regular parochial school work with Sister Mary Etienne taking charge. The Register of 1903, September, indicated the dedication of this department and perhaps tells the story of its success. At the top of the Register Book, Sister Mary Etienne wrote, "All for Thee, Sacred Heart of Jesus." <sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. n.p.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., n.p.

The number in attendance in this commercial school is almost negligible at the present, and for some years it has been open only to girls.

A sodality for the young boys of the parish was established about 1905 and was given the name of Sacred Heart Sodality. In order to gain admission to this, a young man was required to be a graduate of St. Bridget's, and to have completed a year of probation after graduation. This meant that the young man who demonstrated continuous fervor for that year could begin active participation in the sodality. The boys in school were guided by the Sisters in a junior sodality. Both these organizations through the many years have accomplished much in the way of Catholic Action.

The Catholic Directory of 1940 gives the enrollment at St. Bridget's as three hundred-four pupils. That this section of the city has become an industrial center accounts for the great decrease in numbers. With the opening of new parishes in new sections of the city, many of the old parishioners went out from St. Bridget's to help build up the new parts. Despite this drop in numbers and with it the attendant poverty of the parish, the Sisters of Charity are still continuing their labors at St. Bridget parochial school, known to many as "Bridgeport."<sup>15</sup>

The entrance of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary into St. Vincent's parish schools took place in 1883. The Sisters were given this invitation in a manner somewhat different from the usual form. It seems that Father Thomas Edwards, the pastor of Annunciation, and Father Edward M. Smith, C.M., the pastor of St. Vincent's, must have talked over the accomplishments of the good Sisters at Annunciation School, for "Father Smith remarked to a friend one day while speaking on the school question, 'When I have a school, Father Edwards' Sisters will conduct it for me.'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.

<sup>16</sup>The Vincentian Weekly, October 31, 1926, p. 35.

The good Father Edwards died before Father Smith had a school ready, but on August 22nd, 1883, while the Sisters of the Annunciation school were recreating on the porch of their modest little convent, a tall, stately clergyman approached them and, after a cordial invitation, began:

Well, I want ye to come over and teach my school. Good Father Edwards promised me that his Sisters would do this for me as soon as I was ready; now I am ready. I have a sufficient number of children in my parish and I wish to start my school. When I built the church it was with the intention of having it serve as a church, a rectory and a school. Accordingly, I had the middle portion made into four large school rooms but it has taken nigh to a decade of years to realize my heart's cherished desire.

The superior, Sister Mary Purification, replied to the good priest, "Father, Sister Mary Agatha and I expect to go to Dubuque tonight to see our Mother General. We shall present your appeal to Mother and plead earnestly for the success of your cause."<sup>17</sup>

The very next Sunday Father Smith announced to his congregation that the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary would take charge of the school at St. Vincent's and that they would be there the following day to register the little ones as pupils. That same Sunday afternoon, Father Smith returned to the Annunciation convent with the letter which he had received from Mother Mary Francis Clarke the day before. He said, "Well, ye are coming. Today I announced to my people that ye would be with us tomorrow, as I want my children started in school before the public schools begin. Ye can ride over for a few days until I have your home ready. I shall soon have it, and, until that time, ye can have dinner every day at my house."<sup>18</sup>

Three Sisters from Annunciation school were assigned to the

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 35; also Community Archives, document signed by Sister Mary Gregory, B.V.M.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

new mission at St. Vincent's as well as one more from St. Aloysius. They were: Sister Mary Ascension, first superior, Sister Mary Paschal, and Sister Mary Gregory from the Annunciation, while Sister Mary Justa was the lone one from St. Aloysius. Mother Mary Francis Clarke had lost no time after receiving Father Smith's request, as these Sisters were notified of their new assignment on August 25, 1883.

Street car connections were so inconvenient in those days that the Sisters walked back and forth from Annunciation convent until their convent was prepared for them on Fremont Street. Perhaps it was just as well, as very pleasant associations of their earliest days at St. Vincent's were formed in those first two weeks. The children made manifest their joy in the new-found acquaintance with the Sisters. The story goes that nearly every morning boys and girls alike hustled from their homes to meet the Sisters and to have the pleasure of accompanying them the rest of the way to school. The girls played many a trick on one another in order to get the coveted place close to the Sisters as they walked along, while the boys used all their wiles to keep both the Sisters and girls in a state of consternation. They chased squirrels, climbed to the smallest branches of the trees and whistled to the Sisters, who beheld these lads in their precarious positions with dread.

Two weeks passed and Father Smith had the new convent ready for the Sisters. The rooms were nicely furnished except the parlor, and there not a single adornment could be found. "This is not your part. This is the people's. They will take care of it,"<sup>19</sup> explained Father Smith as he took

---

<sup>19</sup>

Ibid.

the Sisters through the house. The enrollment increased from ninety-seven to two hundred fifty-three within the first year at St. Vincent's. Within less than two years so many applied for admission that six classrooms were required, taxing all available space in the combination building. Because of failing health, Father Smith was relieved of duties at St. Vincent's. Fathers J.A. Moloney, C.M. and Thomas J. Abbott, C.M. followed each other in quick succession as pastor. Then came Father Guedry, C.M., who set to work to find ways and means for eliminating the crowded conditions under which the Sisters and pupils worked. Through the foresight of Father Smith, property had been procured, and, on July 27, 1890, the cornerstone for the present St. Vincent school was laid by the Very Reverend Vicar General, M.J. Dowling, pastor of St. Bridget's church. In 1891 on the Feast of the Assumption, while the children marched in procession through the school singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Father Guedry, accompanied by the altar boys, blessed the corridors and rooms. This building was equipped to handle three hundred children, but when school opened in September, three hundred forty-six registered. Only one thing could be done\* to remedy the situation and that was to use the assembly hall on the top floor for school purposes. When the assembly hall was converted into classrooms, there was sufficient space for the grades as well as a high school, but the latter department grew to such proportions that, in 1902, another building was added to the rear of the school. This new building provided twelve rooms for school purposes. Three rooms of the front building were then given over to the Sisters as living quarters, while some of the others were converted into high school rooms. Eighty high school pupils were in attendance at the time. In January, 1911, when the high school department was moved into the St. Vincent Lyceum building at 2233 Sheffield Avenue,

the name of the school became De Paul High School for Girls. This building was soon outgrown, and in 1917 the Doyle apartment building at 2244 Osgood Street was procured and equipped for high school use. Those Sisters who taught at the high school now moved from St. Vincent's to a new convent where Sister Mary Lambertina acted as their first superior. During the years that the high school was in existence, either as St. Vincent's or De Paul, the following Sisters were in charge of its various departments at one time or another: Sister Mary Gregory, Sister Mary Immaculata, Sister Mary Huberta, Sister Mary Gervase, Sister Mary Euthalia, Sister Mary Hortense, Sister Mary Richard, Sister Mary Ludovine, Sister Mary Remi, Sister Mary Tertulla, Sister Mary Clare, Sister Mary Callista, Sister Mary St. Henry, Sister Mary Helene, Sister Mary Feliciana, and Sister Mary Angelita.

The last year of this school's existence was in 1921 when The Immaculata High School was opened by the Sisters of Charity on the north side. The junior class of that year, under the direction of a secular teacher, was permitted to finish at De Paul Academy in June, 1922. Today the elementary school at St. Vincent's is a thriving institution. A new building was completed in 1926. This has made it possible to have equipment as modern as that of any other school in the city of Chicago. The parish celebrated the Golden Anniversary of the establishment of the school under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in September, 1940. The number of children in attendance in the year 1940 was 670.<sup>20</sup> The peak in attendance was reached in the school year of 1919-1920, when one thousand one hundred-twenty students registered. The largest graduating class was that of 1918, when one hundred-twenty boys and girls received

---

<sup>20</sup>The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.



diplomas; that of June, 1940 numbered seventy-three.<sup>21</sup>

From humble beginnings great things develop, and this is the case with St. Charles Borromeo parish in Chicago. It will be remembered that Father F.S. Henneberry of St. Pius parish, deeply interested in the education of the young people under his jurisdiction, established an out-mission from St. Pius school with the permission of Mother Mary Francis Clarke. It was this out-mission that later developed into St. Charles parish. The building in which the children were housed was owned by Mr. Ryan, and since the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated there on Sundays and holy days, the building got the name of "Ryan's Cathedral." To teach the little ones assembled here, the first Sisters, Sister Mary Omer, Sister Mary Winifred, and Sister Mary Andrew walked from St. Pius convent everyday regardless of heat or cold, the darkness or beauty of the sky. In August of 1885 Father P.D. Gill was appointed to St. Charles as pastor. Even though it cut into his territory, Father Henneberry did everything in his power to help Father Gill establish the new parish. A two story building serving as church and school was planned and erected on Cypress Street. The entire second story was given over to school rooms and living quarters for the Sisters whom Father Gill had invited to take charge. In September of 1886, Father Gill wrote the following letter to Sister Mary Agatha:

September 21, 1886

Mother Mary Agatha,

I will be ready, (D.V.) for school next Monday. You may I think notify the Superior to come up here next Sunday afternoon, as I will ask the people to call on her and make arrangements for the children. I do not think it safe for the Sisters to begin living here next week. There would be danger. Could we manage to have them remain in other houses for a short time. Father Henneberry promises to look after three of the band. What can do [sic] be done

<sup>21</sup> Annals, St. Vincent Convent, Chicago.

for the balance.

and oblige

Please let me know your wishes

Yr. very respectfully  
P.D. Gill 22

Sister Mary Agatha wrote the following to Mother Clarke in regard to the above letter:

. . .  
I'll tell the Sisters to remain here until he is ready. [at St. Aloysius] They can go up in the cars every morning for that short time. Send the Sisters as you see he requires them. I hope Sister Mary Gertrude will come with them.

22

Sister Mary Agatha

In September, 1886, the school opened with an enrollment of one hundred and twenty pupils, while the teaching staff was made up of Sister Mary Florentina, superior, Sister Mary Ida, Sister Mary Eulogia, and Sister Mary Winifred.<sup>23</sup> These numbers were of short duration, however, for, as soon as the present church was completed in 1897, the old building was renovated and used for school and convent only. By 1902 the faculty and pupils had so increased that more classrooms and a larger convent became a necessity. Father Muldoon, who had become pastor when Father Gill was transferred to Mount Carmel in 1895, presented plans to his people and the Annals state, "Contributions generously poured in and his dream--a beautiful convent--became a reality."<sup>24</sup>

Although the first graduating class in 1888 had only four members, by 1903 there were three hundred eighty-two eighth grade graduates eligible to become members of the Alumni Association which was formed that year. In

<sup>22</sup>Letters relative to Chicago Schools, Mother General's Office, Dubuque, Iowa.

<sup>23</sup>Community Archives, Pioneer List.

<sup>24</sup>Annals, St. Charles School, Chicago.

the Silver Jubilee Book, published in 1910, the following is noted in regard to the St. Charles parochial school:

The schools of the parish have been, and are, not only our burden, but our pride. It has been with great difficulty that we have kept pace with the ever-increasing number of children. Year after year, a number of school buildings have been erected, and yet the cry is, "More room needed." Great as the task has been, it has been the source of intense satisfaction, for we realize most deeply that religious men and women can be found only where childhood is taught the lessons of the Master.

We cannot say too strong words of praise in favor of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who have endured many hardships in bringing the schools to their present high standard.<sup>25</sup>

Judging from the list of graduates in 1910, the predominance of Irish in the parish can be noted. The graduating list of 1940, however, indicates that the Italians have out-numbered the Irish in St. Charles parish. There were five hundred twenty-five pupils listed for St. Charles in The Official Catholic Directory for 1940, and seventeen Sisters engaged in teaching. Fifty-eight pupils were graduated in the class of 1940.

The Reverend Matthew A. Canning became the pastor in June, 1931 and his first work was repairing and remodelling the school. The basements were cleaned and transformed into spacious recreation rooms and before school opened in September the entire school plant had undergone a complete renovation. Encouraged by the success of his efforts, Father Canning next took up the renovation of the convent, and before the Golden Jubilee of St. Charles parish took place in 1925, the convent had been converted into a  
26  
thoroughly modern building.

Filled with the spirit of the Church, to follow her people wherever they

---

<sup>25</sup>Jubilee Booklet, St. Charles Borromeo parish, Chicago.

<sup>26</sup>Annals, St. Charles Borromeo Convent and School, Chicago.

go, Father Henneberry of St. Pius established a mission parish for those of his people who lived in Lawndale. It was this out-mission that developed into Blessed Sacrament parish. The people of Lawndale were so enthusiastic, that Father Henneberry, thus encouraged, began in 1890 the erection of a permanent church. In the basement of this structure, Mass was said on Christmas Day, 1890. The next year on Christmas Day, Mass was offered for the first time in the completed church, and peculiarly enough, after the addition was completed in 1903, the Holy Sacrifice was again offered for the first time in the enlarged church on Christmas. Christmas, 1938, was another especially gala day in Blessed Sacrament parish, for on that day the magnificent new church was formally opened with the first celebration of Mass within the new walls. Just where do the Sisters of Charity fit into this picture? To answer this, we must go back to the first mission church in the parish. When Father Henneberry or one of his assistants came from St. Pius on Sunday to look after the spiritual welfare of the people in the newly forming parish, he was accompanied by two Sisters from St. Pius school, who gathered the children of the sixty families within the parish around them for instruction. Because of ill health, Father J.A. Coughlin, the first resident pastor at Blessed Sacrament, was forced to give up his duties less than a year after his appointment. Father Dunne followed him, taking charge of the eighty-seven families then resident in the parish. Lawndale was rapidly being changed into a great residential section and, of course, the parish grew. The Silver Jubilee Booklet of 1915 states, "Plans for building a parochial school occupied Father Dunne's undivided attention. And as he was an enthusiast on the subject of Catholic education, he built a handsome building, one of the finest and largest in the city." <sup>27</sup> The following

---

<sup>27</sup> The Silver Jubilee Booklet, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, 1915.

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Sister Mary Matilda, Sister Mary Chrysanthia, Sister Mary Agrippina, Sister Mary Virginia, Sister Mary Francis and Sister Mary Ursula, opened the new school which had an enrollment of three hundred pupils. The Golden Jubilee Booklet says:

With a general awakening of Catholics to the need and values of Catholic education, so evident throughout our Archdiocese and nation, Blessed Sacrament school's attendance steadily increased. Our 1939-1940 enrollment was 832 pupils, the largest since 1916. Our increased enrollment is due in large measure to the transfer of public school pupils, in all grades, to our school. Another very important factor in the Blessed Sacrament school is, indeed, the genius and unselfish devotion of our Sisters to their work. Welcoming to their classrooms at any time of the school year any child who came to them from another school, the Sisters cheerfully devoted many hours of kindly special attention to bring the new pupil up to the scholastic grade of his class and to make him contented and happy in his new environment. 28

May not these words of high commendation given the Sisters be attributed to their untiring efforts in visiting the sick in the parish as well as to their solicitude (early fostered by the good Father Dunne) about bringing every Catholic child to attend the parish school?

On June 19, 1893, Archbishop Feehan summoned Reverend Father Michael Bonfield, an assistant at St. Bridget's, to tell him he was his choice for the work of establishing a parish in the vicinity of Douglas Park. After pondering a few days over the possibilities of success, or failure, in this undertaking, Father Bonfield spoke to Vicar General Dowling about the interview with the Archbishop, stating that he felt the territory was so limited and the parishioners so few that he could never do what the Archbishop desired of him. Father Dowling listened attentively to the plaintive story of the young priest, and then said, "The territory is small, the park will

---

28 The Golden Jubilee Booklet, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, 1940.

be a drawback, but certainly there is a greater number of Catholics there than St. Patrick found when he went to Ireland." <sup>29</sup> This remark was plenty for Father Bonfield. He immediately began to work up his new mission. The first Mass was said in Douglas Park pavilion on July 8, 1893. Among the thirty persons who attended this Mass was Sister Mary Agatha, a personal friend of Father Bonfield. Sister brought with her a group of young ladies from St. Aloysius, who added to the glory of the occasion by their singing. After Mass was over, Sister mentioned in Father Bonfield's presence, that, since so many of her former pupils were about to move into the new parish, St. Agatha should be its patron, and so St. Agatha's responsibilities for the new venture began.

A few weeks elapsed before Father Bonfield was able to procure suitable property to begin the erection of a modest church; when this was accomplished, Father began preparations for providing a school. In 1895<sup>30</sup> the school became a reality. At once "there resulted an influx of many families who knew and appreciated well the work of the Sisters of Charity in neighboring parishes."<sup>31</sup> The school opened with an enrollment of ninety-eight pupils. Sister Mary Evangelista, the first superior, was assisted by the following corps of teachers that first year: Sister Mary Constance, Sister Mary Seraphica, Sister Mary Justa, and Sister Mary Sylvester. Sister Mary Evangelista wrote: "The place was a prairie; there was no boulevard, no street paved and the car lines nearest had the old horse car."<sup>32</sup> By 1901 the growth in the parish population had been so great that Father Bonfield

---

<sup>29</sup> Annals, St. Agatha Convent and School, Chicago.

<sup>30</sup> St. Agatha Annals give above date; records at Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa, give 1897.

<sup>31</sup> Annals, St. Agatha Convent and School, Chicago.

<sup>32</sup> Archives, Mount Carmel, Box marked "Chicago."

began to worry about what could be done to provide additional school space for the children. A third story was added to the combination church, school and convent, providing five additional schoolrooms and larger quarters for the growing faculty. In 1903 the school building was again enlarged; by erecting a new church the space formerly used for church was converted into school use. The enrollment reached its highest point in 1910 when the registration counted up to seven hundred-forty pupils, and for the next six years, it continued to range between five and six hundred. Between 1920 and 1926, an infiltration of Jews into the district made itself felt. New subdivisions of West Chicago were opened up and many of St. Agatha's parishioners moved into them. The attendance at St. Agatha's school dropped until it reached two hundred-fifty where it remained for several years. However, "school opened September 6, 1939, with an increased registration due in part to the work done in the parish by the 'Little Helpers of the Holy Souls'".<sup>33</sup> This necessitated the conversion of the Lodge Hall in the school building into two schoolrooms. In the early days, St. Agatha's pupils were nearly all of Irish or German extraction, of parents who had formerly lived in Holy Family, Sacred Heart, St. Pius, or St. Charles parishes. Today, one finds represented a few Irish, a few Germans, many Italians and negroes, some Chinese, and other nationalities.<sup>34</sup>

In May, 1898, Archbishop Feehan appointed Father James J. Jennings to organize a new parish in West Chicigo. This was dedicated to Our Lady under the title of her Presentation. At this time there were about eighty-five families living within the boundaries fixed for the new parish. The first Mass in the Presentation environs was celebrated on August 7, 1898 by

---

<sup>33</sup> Annals, St. Agatha Convent and School, Chicago.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

Father J.A. Coughlin of St. Charles parish. The building used for a church was indeed very modest. It was a store building which was rented for twelve dollars per month and was used to serve as a church and rectory. The boys' school building was the first to be erected by the parish. In the lower floor church services were conducted until the permanent church was erected.

The following Sisters came to the convent at Presentation on August 1, 1900 in order to prepare for the opening of the school year in September: Sister Mary of the Angels, first superior, Sister Mary Emmerentius, Sister Mary Agnesita, Sister Mary Dominica, and Sister Mary Concepta. They conducted school in what was called "the boys' school." The registration that first September was considered very good--there were one hundred-twenty boys and girls on the roll. By 1912, when the girls' school was built, the number of parishioners had increased immensely. There were now, instead of eighty-five families, one thousand three hundred sixty-eight to supply the pupils for Presentation. By 1926 one thousand one hundred pupils were enrolled in this very up-to-date school. In 1940 eight hundred fifty are in attendance and twenty-three Sisters make up the faculty. A new convent, modern in every respect, was erected within the last five years. The city of Chicago has within the last forty years been introduced to 3,750 graduates of Presentation school.

35

In 1891, Father D.D. Hishen was commissioned by Archbishop Feehan to organize a parish in that part of Chicago known as Woodlawn District, and Father lost no time in beginning his work. As there were very few houses in the district and Father Hishen had his choice of property for the church, he was to organize, he procured the site upon which the building stands



today. Mass was first said in a store on Cottage Grove Avenue, near Sixty Seventh Street. Here Father intended to carry out his missionary work until such time as he could procure funds actually to establish work on a church building. The first collection amounted to \$6.40 and the rent to \$4.00. When Father announced that two Masses would be said there the following Sunday, the landlord raised the next week's rent to \$8.00. Father Hishen counted up the profits, realized that this scheme would not build a church, and on the next Sunday, the weather being fine, he brought an altar on his back to the spot where he hoped it would rest in the new church he planned, and from that time on, Mass was said on Holy Cross property. A frame church was built on this spot which served the parishioners of Holy Cross until the present building was erected in 1909.

Ground was broken for a parochial school, April, 1901. In September the building was ready to receive its first residents. The two hundred-forty children who responded to the announcement of the proud pastor were placed under the direction of the following Sisters: Sister Mary Euna, superior, Sister Mary Octavia, Sister Mary Evangelista, Sister Mary Patronia, Sister Mary Alphonse, Sister Mary Virgilia, Sister Mary Jarlath, and Sister Mary Orestes of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From the very beginning, as announced, the aim of this school was "to instill the love of God into the young hearts of its pupils and inculcate high ideals."<sup>36</sup> With this end in view the pastors and Sisters at Holy Cross have given untiring attention toward its fulfillment. In June, 1902 the first graduates, (five boys and two girls) received diplomas.

The school grew so rapidly that in 1903 the living quarters which the Sisters had used in the school building were required for school purposes

---

<sup>36</sup> Annals, Holy Cross School, Chicago.

7

and a convent was built. By 1910, the school auditorium was requisitioned for classrooms and another addition was made to the convent in order to accommodate the increased faculty. "Long before the silver chimes sounded a Jubilee, the registration had reached one thousand. Within the past few years, the settlement of the colored race in the western portion of the parish forced many families to move their homes, thus causing a drop in registration, which at present is six hundred."<sup>37</sup> Father Hishen appreciated the work done in Holy Cross parish by the Sisters, as this article, written and signed by him in 1921, testifies:

...The B.V.M. Sisters have taught without interruption every new generation as it were, of infant beginners to their graduation on that long series of development--turning them out as graduates for more study or commercial life--one thousand strong...There was no factor in the life of Holy Cross parish more important and powerful in the building up of our church interests and maintaining the Faith of this generation of our people than our school.

...They have never complained. They have never appealed; the morning never came that found them late or absent from their devotions and never did the closing day find them wearied or discouraged in their useful labors.

They are now in the twentieth year of their distinguished service--all of the noblest principle and exalted virtue among our people. No praise, nor even gratitude, can measure up to the abiding trust of our people in the integrity and ever unquestioned virtue and service of our Sisterhood at Holy Cross school.<sup>38</sup>

The very same type of appreciation for the Sisters and their work was expressed by Monsignor Dunne, present pastor at Holy Cross, in an address which he gave upon the celebration of the Community's centenary. In part

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Community Archives, Dubuque, Iowa, Box 1, "Chicago."

he said:

Today, on the Feast of All Saints, November 1, 1933, we are celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which, from the beginning of this parish, have furnished the Sisters who with heroic zeal and unselfishness have toiled, yes, have spent themselves physically, for the intellectual, moral and spiritual upbuilding of those under their care. You are all of one mind with me when I say that it is only fitting and proper that we should celebrate<sup>39</sup> the one hundredth anniversary as solemnly as possible.

In 1901 the following Sisters were assigned to teach in Father Maloney's school in St. Lawrence parish: Sister Mary Theodore, superior, Sister Mary Vestina, Sister Mary Adelbert, Sister Mary Rachel, Sister Mary Sylvester, Sister Mary Menard, and Sister Mary Stanislaus.<sup>40</sup> Between four and five hundred pupils were registered at the opening of the school. In December, 1912, after twelve happy and successful years at St. Lawrence, the Sisters of Charity retired from the work in this parish. Since that time the school has been conducted by the Sisters of St. Dominic whose Mother House is in Adrian.

In 1903, out from the distant north side of Chicago, came a call for Sisters to staff the beautiful school which Father Noel Perry and his parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes parish had completed during the previous year. The Sisters of Charity cheerfully accepted this invitation and the first Sisters to be assigned to this magnificent school were: Sister Mary Charlotte, superior, Sister Mary Lillian, Sister Mary Amelia, Sister Mary Pionia, Sister Mary Wendelin, Sister Mary Emma, Sister Mary Mercy, Sister Mary Euphemia, and Sister Mary Pascalina.<sup>41</sup> School opened with a registration

<sup>39</sup> Annals, Holy Cross School and Convent, Chicago; "Monsignor Dunne's Centenary Address."

<sup>40</sup> Community Archives, Pioneer List.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

of three hundred pupils who came from far and near to this pioneer Catholic school of the North Side. Many were attracted by the beauty and completeness of the new building. The Advanced Benziger Geography carried a picture of the building, calling it the "ideal Catholic school." The Lourdes Dedication Booklet of May, 1916, states that "the great monument of Father Perry's life is the school of Our Lady of Lourdes, one of the finest in the country."<sup>42</sup>

The need for a high school to care for the young ladies of the parish was keenly felt by Father Perry and his parishioners, so that in 1906 Lourdes High School was opened with an enrollment of twenty-six girls. High standards were maintained in this school during its life, and many young ladies were given the education necessary to start them out well in the business of life. Among the three hundred-twenty<sup>43</sup> of its graduates many entered Normal College and became teachers in the Chicago public schools and several of them may be found teaching in the parochial and community schools of the United States.

As the number of grade school children increased, it became evident to the pastor that if the high school were to be continued a new building would be required to house either the grade or the high school. This would necessitate a great sacrifice on the part of the parishioners of Lourdes and so the high school was closed in favor of The Immaculata High School in 1921. The school population of this parish has not diminished, but, on the contrary, has increased. Since 1935, when the entire school building was renovated, and a beautiful new convent erected, due to the efforts of the present pastor, Right Reverend Monsignor John P. Campbell, the enrollment increased

---

<sup>42</sup>Our Lady of Lourdes Dedication Booklet, May, 1916.

<sup>43</sup>School Files, Our Lady of Lourdes School, Chicago.

from five hundred to eight hundred.<sup>44</sup> The priests and Sisters working in this parish make every sacrifice possible to see that no Catholic child spends his school days in other than a Catholic school.

Shortly after Archbishop Quigley assumed duties in the Chicago Archdiocese, Holy Name Cathedral parish was divided. This necessarily required a change in the school system that prevailed there at the time. The Christian Brothers conducted a school for boys in what became St. Dominic's parish. The Religious of the Sacred Heart were in charge of the school more closely connected with the Cathedral, but this was only for the accommodation of girls. All would have been easily cared for except that the Christian Brothers were not permitted to teach girls nor were the Religious of the Sacred Heart permitted at that time to have boys in their schools. The result was that two parochial schools were needed in 1904 wherein both boys and girls could be accommodated and this brings us to the establishment of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in each of the two parishes just mentioned.

The first school for boys in Holy Name parish had been opened in 1852 \* and thirty-five or forty pupils were taught by the young men who were students in the University of St. Mary's of the Lake.<sup>45</sup> St. James Free School for girls was opened in 1851 and was taught by three Sisters of Mercy. However, in 1856 the Holy Cross communities came into the parish and the girls were given over to the Sisters while the boys were cared for by the Brothers. There were two hundred fifty girls in the school at that time. In 1858 an Academy of the Holy Name was opened by the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul and in 1861 the Brothers of the Holy Cross were recalled and the boys

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> The University to which Father Donaghoe had been invited by Bishop Quarter. See page 30.

of the parish were placed in the hands of the Christian Brothers until the Chicago Fire in 1871. The Religious of the Sacred Heart were the teachers of both boys and girls of the parish in 1878 when the present parochial school was built. They continued in charge until 1883 when the school that became St. Dominic's was erected and used by the Christian Brothers for the instruction of boys only. This system remained until 1904, when the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary assumed charge of both schools in the two separate parishes.

On August 19, Sister Mary Chionia, the first superior, and her companion, Sister Mary Alphonse, were welcomed to the new mission by Father Fitzsimmons, the rector of the Cathedral. When they were shown around, the Sisters found little trouble making note of the equipment in the forty rooms of the four story brick building. Besides the bare walls, two things were there: a gas stove, and a picture of the Sacred Heart which hung above the stage in the room usually used as an assembly hall. This was surely to be pioneering, and the Sisters loved it. There was the usual hustle and bustle in making things ready for use that always accompanies the opening of a new mission, as well as the usual spirit of cooperation that is one of the characteristics of this Sisterhood. Each problem became everyone's problem until a solution was obtained, so that when school opened on September 6 all was in readiness--that is, for a normal-sized class. This, however, was not the situation, for Sister Mary Balbina and Sister Mary Colombiere were each confronted with one hundred pupils and "Sister Mary Rosella, who had the little ones, counted as many as one hundred twenty-five, but could not say how many more she had."<sup>46</sup> While all the rooms were not as

---

<sup>46</sup> Annals, Holy Name Convent, Chicago, 1904-1910.

crowded as those, it was easily discernible that Sister Mary Chionia, Sister Mary Alphonse, Sister Mary Balbina, Sister Mary Colombiere, Sister Mary Augusta, Sister Mary Bonita, Sister Mary Herbert, Sister Mary Rosella, Sister Mary Harriet, Sister Mary Eulalia, Sister Mary Venantia, and Sister Mary Lourdes would need more help to conduct the school. Father Fitzsimmons immediately went to Dubuque to beg for more Sisters. Sister Mary Leobina (later replaced by Sister Mary Daniel), Sister Mary Alacoque and Sister Mary Fabian were the answer to his begging. Many children came to the school from the public schools, as this account testifies: "After all things were adjusted, one room contained sixty-four, thirty-two of whom were from the public schools."<sup>47</sup> In spite of all the adjustments, another teacher was required. Just before Christmas, Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart came to be a member of the Holy Name mission.

A high school was opened in 1905 with Sister Mary Alberic in charge of first year students. Second year classes were organized the following year, and in this manner a complete four year course was eventually worked out. In almost every walk of life the graduates of this high school may be found.\* Among its alumnae are teachers, business women, and women of literary attainments, but by far the largest number are home-makers and mothers who are passing on the influence of a strong Catholic womanhood to another generation. This high school was closed when The Immaculata High School was opened on the north side.

When the Sisters of Charity took over the schools at St. Dominic, Father Griffin was the pastor. This was at the same time that Holy Name was opened, September, 1904. The number of Sisters arranged for at St.

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Dominic's was as far below the number needed, as was found to be the case at Holy Name. Sister Mary Casia was the first superior and with her were Sister Mary Placidus, Sister Mary Winifred, Sister Mary Priscilla, Sister Mary Theodora, Sister Mary Theodosia, Sister Mary Louis, Sister Mary Assumption, Sister Mary Timothy, Sister Mary Mark, and Sister Mary Justinus. These Sisters with the Misses Kane, Manley, Clerken, and Shannon completed the staff of workers for the school year of 1904-1905 at St. Dominic's. Very close to one thousand pupils asked admission in 1904.<sup>48</sup> Since that time the locality of St. Dominic's has been invaded by factories and an Italian rather than an Irish population. From 1904 to 1920 the number of families in the parish had decreased from one thousand to about two hundred-fifty, and the school population decreased from about one thousand to five hundred sixty-eight. At present there are only one hundred-fifteen children in attendance at St. Dominic's.<sup>49</sup> With the withdrawal of the old-time property owners, interest in the church and school property has lessened. However, since 1918, both the convent and school have been renovated. At that time, the condition of the place had become so untenable that the Sisters were almost forced to withdraw. In fact, this is one mission where the pinch of poverty has always made itself felt, but the common need has created a bond between pupils and Sisters that has brought forth fruits of loyalty and generosity. Truly, here, among God's poor, the Sisters feel the sting of poverty and know, too, the joy that it brings.

The year 1904 was a banner one in the Congregation's Chicago history. Besides opening the missions at Holy Name Cathedral and at St. Dominic's,

---

<sup>48</sup> Community Archives, Dubuque, Iowa, Box 2, "Chicago."

<sup>49</sup> The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.



another was begun in Our Lady of the Angels parish, under the direction of Father Hynes. The parish was new so Father Hynes, in 1904, had a building with four classrooms and living quarters for the Sisters erected. This was considered ample space to provide for the education of the children of the parish, but, when school opened the very first September, every available space was in use. The four Sisters to carry on the work that year were Sister Mary Louise, the first superior, Sister Mary Justa, Sister Mary Anna, and Sister Mary Elias. It was but a short time when so many new parishioners had moved into Our Lady of the Angels parish that a new building was added to the first one, and another was built a short distance away, yet connected to the first. This addition brought the schoolrooms up to fourteen, but again, within a very short time, more were needed. Father Hynes took care of the situation by procuring the "Honeymoon Flats" which had been built across the street. These were remodelled to suit the convenience of the Sisters and have since that time been the convent. The rooms that were vacated by the Sisters in the school building were immediately turned into schoolrooms, thus bringing the total number to eighteen rooms for class work. In 1928 all of these rooms were kept in use and filled to capacity, in fact more than capacity. The same is true today. The Official Catholic Directory for 1940 lists the number of pupils in attendance at Our Lady of the Angels school at nine hundred-six.

In 1928 so many applied to attend school that some were forced to go to the public school. At that time, a shift in the type of parishioners was noted. The Annals state,

Many foreigners, especially those of the Italian race, have settled in the locality, and there is not room enough in the school for all who apply. As there seems to be no remedy in sight to make up in some

way for this loss the Sisters teach catechism to the public school children on Sundays after the children's Mass and prepare them to receive the sacraments...The boys and girls have their own Sundays for Sodality Communion, but many of these dear children are weekly communicants.<sup>50</sup>

Renovation in the school and convent of Our Lady of the Angels was carried out in 1936, 1937 and 1938. All the corridors and classrooms were re-decorated. The corridors were covered with attractive black and maroon colored asphalt-tile which silences the noise of almost a thousand pair of shuffling feet, as well as helps to keep the building clean; windows have been carefully repaired; desks have been scraped and varnished anew.<sup>51</sup> In this building, made almost new again, nineteen Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary continue the work that was begun in 1904 by Sister Mary Louise, Sister Mary Anna, Sister Mary Justa and Sister Mary Elias.<sup>52</sup>

With the rising tide of population in Chicago during the early part of the present century, many new parishes were required. In 1901, to accommodate the Catholics living in the vicinity of Iowa Street and Leamington Avenue, another new parish, whose roots were in the parish of St. Catherine, was begun. It was on the Feast of Our Lady, September 8, 1901, that Father Joseph P. O'Reilly as pastor said Mass in the new parish dedicated to Our Lady, Help of Christians. Plans were immediately made for the erection of a combination church, school and Sisters' residence, but it was not until August 15, 1907, that Mother Mary Cecilia appointed the six Sisters who were to carry the work of the school and convent. They were Sister Mary

---

<sup>50</sup> Annals, Our Lady of the Angels School, Chicago, (convent copy).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Community Archives, Pioneer List.

Remi, superior, Sister Mary Delphine, Sister Mary Hildebert, Sister Mary Leola, Sister Mary Mark, and Sister Mary Thecla. Sickness caused the substitution of Sister Mary Ligouri for Sister Mary Delphine, and Sister Mary Octavia for Sister Mary Leola before the first year at Our Lady, Help of Christians was completed.

53

School opened on September 3, 1907, and, even though the building was not completed, the Sisters managed to carry on their classes in the old church on the corner of Iowa and Fifty-First Streets. This was a great and difficult task, as there were about two hundred pupils for all the grades, and only one large room in which to teach. Those trying days only served to accentuate the joys that were felt by both pupils and Sisters when the building was finally ready. The first floor was a large auditorium which was used as a church; the second floor was divided into classrooms and the third floor was the Sisters' residence. It might appear that having a convent on the third floor would prove a hardship to the Sisters, but the only drawback was that some of the more easily frightened Sisters were sure that all outsiders might begin to realize how easy it was to reach the convent, since access to it was possible either by the front or back stairs. The school grew steadily and in its second year a fifth room was opened to provide for the newcomers. Members of the class that was graduated in 1909 distinguished themselves by winning scholarships to St. Ignatius, De Paul, St. Mary and Providence High Schools. By September, 1915, there were nine classrooms and these became so crowded that in December another was added. When school opened the next year, the eleventh became a necessity. With the growth of the school, the Sisters moved into the convent which was

built for them in 1912, but, by 1917, the number of Sisters needed in the school necessitated the finishing of the third floor of the convent. This was done and the first and second floors were remodelled at the same time, the expenses being defrayed by the returns of a Three Day Sale sponsored by the school children and contributions from the Married Ladies' Sodality.

In 1919-1920 the number of pupils in the first grade was so numerous that a double shift was tried but found to be so unsatisfactory that, in February, 1920, the only room not then used as a classroom was turned over to the forty-five first graders and the school's office was transferred to a section of a corridor on an upper floor, which was partitioned off for this purpose. Co-education in the eighth grade was reverted to in Our Lady, Help of Christians school in the school year of 1924-1925. This had not been tried for ten years, and since there were only fifty eighth graders, it was tried again. In some of the other grades the same arrangement was made but for some reason was not immediately resumed again after this one year's trial. Graduation exercises were held in the church just two days before the opening of the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago, June, 1926. This was the first and last time graduation was held in the church during the lifetime of the first pastor, Reverend Joseph P. O'Reilly.

The new church was dedicated in November, 1928, amidst much splendor, In the procession one hundred fifty altar boys participated, and present that day was the Reverend William O'Connor, who had said his first Mass in the old church just a few weeks previous. The first pupil from Our Lady, Help of Christians parish to become a priest, Father O'Connor had received his elementary education in the parish school.

The summer of 1928 provided three extra classrooms as well as an assembly hall, through the remodeling of the entire first floor, although the

school office still remained in the third floor corridor. In 1934-1935 co-education was resumed from the first to the seventh grades inclusive, and is maintained today. This 1934 school year brought with it much excitement and rejoicing, for, when the Legion of Decency parade was announced as a coming event, the pastor, the Sisters, and the pupils of Our Lady, Help of Christians all put their shoulders to the wheel to make it a great success. Our Lady, Help of Christians school won the trophy for the best unit in the grade school division of the Chicago parade. Bishop Sheil presented the trophy to a happy pastor, enthusiastic teachers, and a much-pleased student body on December 20, 1934.

When Father O'Reilly died in 1935, after thirty-five years of labor in the parish, it was found that the one hundred-fifty families had grown to twelve hundred and that the school enrollment had increased from two hundred to one thousand.

Father Richard S. Kelly, former pastor at Blessed Sacrament, succeeded Father O'Reilly at Our Lady, Help of Christians. He saw that the school was crowded again, and went to work to remedy the situation, adding two more rooms and bringing the total number of classrooms to eighteen in 1936. The school office was brought down from the third to the first floor and the latest equipment was installed. Three cottages were then procured and razed in order to provide playgrounds for the children. The next move was to carry out Father O'Reilly's initial enterprise, a convent with private rooms for the Sisters. This was done by an addition to the old convent, which, by the way, was the first one in the city to provide private rooms for the Sisters. A new kitchen, dining room, community room and a roof garden were added while the space which had been occupied in the old convent for the necessary parts was made into private rooms. The chapel was moved to the

second floor and fitted out with entirely new liturgical furnishings.

In September, 1938, Father Kelly became Monsignor. The children of the school helped to make the day of his investiture a glorious success. They formed a guard of honor from the rectory to the church, and as His Eminence, Cardinal Mundelein, came into view, a blast of silver trumpets announced his approach and continued until his entrance into the church, where he was greeted with the familiar "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus" from the lips and hearts of one hundred choir boys.<sup>54</sup>

During the past two years more ground has been procured and work begun upon the erection of a new building which is to serve as a recreation hall as well as a junior high school in Our Lady, Help of Christians parish. The Official Catholic Directory for 1940 states that twenty-two Sisters were engaged in school work in the parish and that nine hundred-ninety children were registered as pupils there in the early part of 1940.

St. Jerome's parish in Rogers Park was an offspring from St. Mary's in Evanston. The first church in this vicinity was erected in 1877, and called St. Catherine, but was destroyed by fire and never rebuilt. The first St. Jerome church was dedicated in 1894 through the efforts of Father Smyth of Evanston. Reverend A.J. Lonergan was its first pastor, but death took him in 1898. Father James F. Callaghan was the pastor until Father P.A. McLoughlin was appointed to this church in 1901, where he remained until his death in 1913. He was a close friend of Father Dore and of Father Noel Perry, and, when talking over his need for a school, but inability to provide a home for Sisters, Father Perry in his usual generous way promised to give lodging to the Sisters in the convent at Lourdes until St. Jerome's parish could provide for them. This agreed, Father McLoughlin began the

---

<sup>54</sup> Annals, Our Lady, Help of Christians Convent.

erection of a school building in early 1905, secured the services of two Sisters from the Mother House at Mount Carmel, Dubuque, and, in general, made all preparations for the opening of school in September, 1905.

Sister Mary Agnese and Sister Mary Catherine were the first two assigned to this parish. They opened the school in September, 1905, with sixty pupils on the books. Each Sister took charge of two grades, so that there were only the first, second, third and fourth grades opened in 1905. Those children who started in the fourth grade were the first graduates, in 1910. During the very last month of school, 1910, the school was examined for the first time by two district superintendents and accredited to the public school system. In 1909, Sister Mary Cherubina was appointed the first local superior at St. Jerome's. This was made necessary by the opening of a convent in the Brown residence, just west of the school. A new and very modern convent was erected in 1926, and the land upon which the first convent stood has since been used for the west wing of the school. Competition for students always ran high during the early days at St. Jerome's as the notion was prevalent that Catholic school training was not sufficient to prepare members of the many wealthy families who lived in this vicinity to fill the place in society that would be expected of them. There was another serious handicap as well; "in St. Jerome's parish there were one hundred forty-nine families [1905]. Seventy-nine of these families were mixed marriages."<sup>55</sup> These conditions only served as stimuli to the Sisters and pastors. They left nothing undone to bring the children into the school to see that they would get Catholic training. Dramatic art and music became a part of the curriculum almost as soon as the school came into being. The Sisters per-

---

<sup>55</sup> Annals, St. Jerome Convent, p. 2.

mitted inspection of the classes at all times not only from those interested, but from those who were merely curious. Children caught the spirit; they went out and got others for their school. Boys grew to love their arithmetic under the direction of Sister Mary Leocadia, who trained the classes from the third to the eighth grades inclusive, in oral arithmetic. The Sisters never spared themselves in devoting time and energy to the backward pupil. In 1916, the first accrediting having expired, the school was again inspected by two examiners. The work of the seventh and eighth grade children in letter-writing, orthography, arithmetic, grammar, and history was so well worked out that not only was the inspection a success but one of the examiners decided to enroll her young nephew in St. Jerome's school.<sup>56</sup>

By 1917, a corps of twelve Sisters was engaged at St. Jerome's, and each grade now had a teacher. Weekly certificates were introduced by Sister Mary Hilary, the new superior, and this tended to enhance the work of the pupils and the interest of the parents in the school. There were at that time about four hundred pupils in St. Jerome's school. Father Farrell had picked up the work of Father McLoughlin where he had left it in 1913, but, by 1931, due to poor health, Father Farrell resigned the pastorate and Father Daniel Frawley, an alumnus of Holy Cross school, was appointed to carry on. The building next door was then purchased to be used for an athletic and recreational hall. Within a very short time after Father Frawley's appointment, a "modern, well-equipped kindergarten, second to none in the city"<sup>57</sup> was added to the already efficient school system.

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 28.



At the same time, a boys' choir was organized under the tutelage of one of the Sisters, ably aided, in times when public direction was needed, by one of the priests of the parish.

The choir has reached an excellence surpassed by few boys' choirs in the city and may be called upon at any time to render appropriate music for any church service. It is, indeed, a most inspiring sight to see those clear-eyed boys, ranging in age from eight to fourteen years, their voices attuned to the singing of God's praises, standing in the sanctuary, heads and hearts uplifted, their faces aglow above the bright red tie of their cassock-surplice garb, watching intently the hand of their director.<sup>58</sup>

The second Sunday of May, Mothers' Day, has been definitely determined for First Communion day at St. Jerome's. At this solemn and beautiful occasion, not only the children who attend St. Jerome's school receive the Bread of Life from the hand of their pastor, but also the children who attend the public school religion classes which are conducted by the Sisters twice a week throughout the school year.

The last Sunday in May witnesses one of the most impressive sights of the year--the crowning of Our Lady as Queen of May. From the eighth grade class the May Queen and her attendants are chosen, those ranking highest in compliance with a number of stated points, being chosen as the immediate cortege of the Queen. The entire student body unites with these privileged ones in chanting the praises of Mary, as the litany is sung while the procession circles around the church. When the younger children have filed into their places, the Queen and her attendants advance up the center aisle, and proceed to the altar of Mary, whereupon the Queen mounts the steps before the statue, and places the crown in position.<sup>59</sup>

At the present time there are five hundred-sixty students enrolled at St. Jerome's and fifteen Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and one lay teacher are engaged in teaching there.<sup>60</sup> The number in the grad-

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>60</sup> The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.

uating classes for the past ten years has remained about the same, but the school year of 1939-1940 showed a decrease in the number of pupils in the lower grades. There are two possible causes for this decrease at St. Jerome's: first, the district of Rogers Park is gradually becoming a transient population with a very perceptible increase in the Jewish population, and secondly, the entire school population of Chicago is being affected by the low birth rate in the city.

St. Gertrude's school had its twenty-eighth birthday in October, 1940. It was opened in a large residence on Granville near Broadway in October, 1912. Its life was only nine months less than that of the parish which had been established in February of the same year with Father Peter F. Shewbridge as the first pastor. Father Shewbridge had hoped to have the combination church and school building ready for September, but his plans did not materialize so the Sisters, rather than have pupils lose so much school time, urged Father to secure this building, where they might begin the scholastic year with the children of St. Gertrude's parish. When the school opened, eighty stalwart youths of the vicinity put in their appearance. After a month in the temporary school, the Sisters and pupils gladly took up their quarters in the newly completed combination building. No eighth grade pupils were accepted for the first year, but there were representatives in all the other elementary grades. The first graduating class, in June, 1914, had ten members.

The enrollment increased rapidly until, in 1922, there were more than five hundred children in the school. To provide for more school space, the Sisters moved their residence from the combination building to an apartment building. Since this time a new and very beautiful convent has been built

for the Sisters. Just before the celebration of the Silver Jubilee of St. Gertrude's parish, the entire school was renovated, re-decorated, and brought up to date in every respect. The Silver Jubilee Booklet states:

St. Gertrude's school, with an enrollment of nearly seven hundred, starts upon the road that leads to its golden jubilee. There is every reason to expect that the next twenty-five years will be as glorious in their success and achievement as the past twenty-five have been, for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary are still in charge. It has been due to the untiring labor and self-sacrifice of these nuns that our school has established its beautiful traditions and its splendid record. They have been the quiet sentinels who year after year have stood guard over the young of our parish and have prepared them so thoroughly for their battle with life.<sup>61</sup>

The following Sisters made up the first staff at St. Gertrude's: Sister Mary Verena, superior, Sister Mary Ursina, Sister Mary Ferdinanda, Sister Mary Tarcissus, Sister Mary Benezetta and Sister Mary Peter.<sup>62</sup>

In early 1916, Father Francis O'Brien was appointed to organize the parish of St. Thomas of Canterbury and, before the year was over, he procured the services of three Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to conduct the school that he would open in September. The temporary school was in the Grosvenor residence, 4827-4829 Kenmore Avenue, which was later used as the parochial residence. Since pupils of only the first four grades were accepted that year, the school was named "The Canterbury Primary School and Kindergarten." When it opened on September 5, 1916, only forty children came but the number increased to sixty before November. During this first year, Sister Mary of the Rosary, Sister Mary Francis Borgia and Sister Mary Leola travelled back and forth from Our Lady of Lourdes convent where they made their home.<sup>63</sup> The combination church and school was ready for occupancy

<sup>61</sup> Silver Jubilee Booklet, St. Gertrude's parish, 1937, p. 22.

<sup>62</sup> Community Archives, Pioneer List.

<sup>63</sup> The Canterburian, November, 1916.

in 1917, and all eight grades were taught in this delightful new building, as well as music, dramatics, and art. St. Thomas of Canterbury is located in a district which has more than its share of hotel and apartment buildings, and the result of this has been seen in the school by the constant variation in registration. Last year, 1940, the parish engaged the services of ten Sisters and two secular teachers. There were three hundred eight pupils enrolled.<sup>64</sup>

It is interesting to note that St. Thomas of Canterbury was the twentieth parish school in Chicago that the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary had been given charge of in the forty-nine years that they had been in Chicago. The opening of the mission at Canterbury marked the beginning of their second hundred schools, for, on the list of foundations, Canterbury is given the one hundred second place.<sup>65</sup>

Foreseeing wonderful possibilities of Chicago's expansion to the south-east of the city, Archbishop Mundelein, in 1916, established several new parishes in that locality. Among these was the parish known as St. Dorothy's. Its territory extended south from Seventy-Eighth Street to Eighty Third Street and east from State Street to Cottage Grove Avenue. The Reverend John B. Scanlon, who for eighteen years had been assistant pastor at St. Charles Borromeo's church, was appointed to the pastorate of the new parish. Immediately he set out to procure land upon which to locate a church and school. He found twenty-four lots at Seventy Eighth and Eberhart Avenue and Seventy-Eighth and Vernon which could be procured for thirteen thousand dollars; with the approval of the Archbishop he purchased the property.

---

<sup>64</sup> The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.

<sup>65</sup> List of Foundations, Community Archives.

On Sunday, July 16, 1916, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the first Mass was celebrated in a hall at 81 East Seventy Fifth Street. Here Mass was celebrated for the parishioners until the new church was ready to be used. A combination church and school was the first aim of the pastor, and, to be sure that teachers would be available for the school, he applied for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to help him out. In September, 1917, the usual time for school to open, the building was not ready, but, nothing daunted, the Sisters opened school on November 19, 1917, just as soon as the building permitted. Despite this late opening date, ninety-six children sought admission to the first seven grades. Sister Mary Lamberta, superior, was assisted in the organization of the school by Sister Mary Laurentia, Sister Mary Francis Clare, Sister Mary Agnes Clare, Sister Mary Noelita, and Sister Mary Callistus. Before school closed in June, 1918, the enrollment at St. Dorothy's had almost doubled the original count. With the rapid growth of the school, it soon became apparent that the room in the school building which had been used by the Sisters as a convent would be needed for class purposes. On August 15, 1923, therefore, ground was broken for the new St. Dorothy's convent. This building was completed in the following March and the happy Sisters moved into the home provided so generously for them.

Father Seanlon was transferred in 1924 to Our Lady of Solace church and Father T.H. Sheridan succeeded him as pastor at St. Dorothy's. Immediately it became his duty to relieve the congested conditions both in the church and school. New classrooms were built in the summer of 1925, bringing the total (originally three) to thirteen separate classrooms. In 1928 the church problem was handled in the form of a new building. In September, 1930 the old choir loft was renovated and made into a very

pleasant classroom and was immediately put to use by thirty-four pupils. This year also saw the beginning of athletic training, work in art, and expression at St. Dorothy's. Apparently there was good material there in the athletic department, for the basketball team won for the school the South Side Championship Trophy as well as the Bernard Fallon Trophy given for the finest appearance at the St. George High School Tournament. In all, four silver cups, and nineteen medals were won for championship in basketball, swimming, and running. Moreover, the band, composed of twenty-six members, carried off first prize at the contest held at the Municipal Pier for the parochial bands of the Archdiocese that year. Two places were also won in the cornet solo contest.

On May 21, 1931, the beautiful ceremony of Coronation of Our Blessed Mother took place for the first time in the history of St. Dorothy's school. The crowds which attended the ceremony could not be accommodated in the church. The following year both the athletic activities and the May Coronation were dropped.

Faced with the possibilities of another overflow school, Father Sheridan, in each of the next two summers, had space that formerly had been used as part of the church, transformed into delightful schoolrooms. The enrollment for 1932-1933 had reached the point of six hundred eighty-seven, and would have been close to seven hundred fifty, if the children of St. Columbanus, who sought admission, had been accepted. This was the situation until 1935, when Father Sheridan was forced to make use of a second portable to accommodate the pupils that were registered. Again, in 1937, another room was made. Not to let accommodations for the Sisters lag in comparison with the school, an addition was made to the convent in the summer of 1938, at which time nineteen Sisters were at St. Dorothy's,

seventeen engaged in classroom work while the other two were kept very with the music classes. The enrollment for 1940 was seven hundred thirty one. The largest graduation class was that of 1938 with eighty-nine members while that of 1940 was composed of eighty-six.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps the best way to tell about the opening of St. Cornelius mission is to use the words of the first superior, Sister Mary Inella, in a letter written to Mother Mary Isabella just two days after the school was opened.

December 8, 1926.

Dear Mother,

St. Cornelius mission has opened at last and it was well worth waiting for. We came over Sunday afternoon and are very happy to be here.

The registration on Monday was really surprising--one hundred pupils presented themselves bright and early and seemed so happy to be in school again. Fifty of these children have been waiting since September for this opening day to come.

Father Lyons has everything arranged for our comfort and convenience and has not overlooked anything in providing us with all we need.

The upper floor of the school building has been furnished for our use, and is very private. One classroom is fitted up for a dormitory, another for a parlor, two small rooms serve as dining room and kitchen. Father Lyons is also going to fix up a room for a chapel...then we will only have to go to the church for Mass.

The people, too, have shown a kindly spirit toward us. On Sunday afternoon the Altar Society was waiting to welcome us, and they presented us with some beautiful table linens and also gave us a shower of provisions, enough to last for many a day...<sup>67</sup>

The one hundred pupils mentioned above were found to be in the first six grades, so the classes were divided among the three Sisters and remained

<sup>66</sup> Annals, St. Dorothy Convent and School, Chicago.

<sup>67</sup> Community Archives, Box 2, "Chicago."

this way until after Christmas, when the last two of the pioneers arrived at St. Cornelius. The first staff included Sister Mary Inella, Sister Mary Emily, Sister Mary Theodora, Sister Mary Claudius, and Sister Mary Hortensia. Before school closed in June, the registration had risen to one hundred-fifty.<sup>68</sup>

Outstanding events of the first year at St. Cornelius were such as these: the adoption of the Palmer Method of writing early in January; the training of the children to participate in processions for Forty Hours' Devotion; a children's mission, to which all Catholic children in public schools were invited. The public school principals cooperated so wholeheartedly that close to five hundred children were able to attend the exercises which were held on Monday and Tuesday at eleven o'clock and three o'clock. All received the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist at the closing on Wednesday morning. On May 15, 1927, the church was dedicated by Bishop Hoban. On the same day one hundred children received Holy Communion and a class of one hundred forty-four children was confirmed.

St. Cornelius' second year was begun on time, with two hundred-forty pupils in attendance, and an additional Sister on the staff. Since there was to be a graduating class this year, an inspection was sought in order to have the school placed on the accredited list of city schools. All worked toward that end; teachers organized and pupils cooperated well. The day for examination finally arrived on May 29:

Three members from the board of education, the district superintendent and two lady supervisors, appeared at the eighth and seventh grade room on this eventful morning as the Diocesan Standard Test was being administered

---

<sup>68</sup> Annals, St. Cornelius School and Convent, Chicago.



They came in and walked around looking at the work of the children at their desks until the time for the test was up.\* Then the superintendent seated himself at the desk with the two ladies on either side of him and proceeded to examine the eighth grade. The first subject was arithmetic and everyone was sent to the board (in groups), each getting a different problem. The seventh came next, in like manner. The next subject was history, and the children were tested minutely in this. In one of the answers the word "Preamble" came up and the superintendent said, "Do you know the Preamble to the Constitution?" The girl replied, "We all know it." "I would like to hear you say it." ... Geography came next and the maps were used extensively. Then came English, and last of all he asked for some of their written work so that he could judge the penmanship. The homework papers were on the desk and he examined these...All the other rooms were inspected but no work was called for in these...At dismissal time the examiners took their leave. 69

That afternoon one of the examiners called to tell the Sisters that the school had been put on the accredited list with a very high rating. Members of the first graduating class, thirteen girls and nine boys, received their diplomas on the evening of June 15 in a very solemn manner in the church. The continuous growth in the school from its earliest days can easily be seen when one notes that four hundred pupils were in attendance at St. Cornelius in 1940, that the staff has been doubled, and that the last \*  
70  
graduating class had forty members.

Just fifteen months after the establishment of St. Tarcissus parish by His Eminence, George Cardinal Mundelein, Father G. Hayden celebrated the first Mass in the new combination church and school building. This memorable event took place on July 22, 1927. The building was completed with eight standard size classrooms, two of which were to serve as living quarters for the Sisters. On August 17, 1927, five Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary came into the parish to prepare the way for the

---

<sup>69</sup>The History of St. Cornelius Convent and School, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

opening of the school in September, when they would begin their work of education in the parish. Arrangements to procure these Sisters had been made during December of the previous year. The first five were: Sister Mary Cypriana, superior, Sister Mary Assumpta, Sister Mary Virginette, Sister Mary Lawrence, and Sister Mary Andrea.<sup>71</sup>

Besides a full grammar course the program provided for music, expression, physical culture, and drawing. Within the first year inspection took place, and the school was placed on the accredited list of city schools. It has grown to keep pace with the development of the district surrounding it. At the end of six years it cared for four hundred eighty-four pupils. In September, 1933, the third and fourth grades were so crowded that it became necessary to relieve the situation. An improvised room was prepared for them on the third floor. This was a part of the building which had been set aside for the use of the Sisters. The next year, however, the Sisters moved into the two-flat apartment at 5738 North Meade Avenue, which Father Hayden had purchased in order to provide a convent. This move made it possible to open up three additional classrooms in the school, and, at the same time, to re-locate the rooms to be used by the different grades in order to have children of the same age close together. In September, 1934, all twelve rooms were occupied, and the room originally designed as a music room came into its own. The student body, in 1940, was made up of nearly five hundred children. The desire for Catholic education has made itself felt in this parish, for despite the fact that the depression caught many of the people without homes fully paid for, the parishioners and pastor have sacrificed much to continue the school with high standards.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup>

Annals, St. Tarcissus School and Convent, Chicago.

<sup>72</sup>

Ibid.

When, at the close of the World War, the Reverend William Murphy, Navy chaplain, landed in New York after a strenuous over-seas voyage, the appointment as pastor of St. Callistus, a little Italian mission, awaited him. To some, this might appear a very simple undertaking, but to one knowing the circumstances the picture was different. The pastor must be able to speak Italian and must possess great tact, for, in this neighborhood, a false priest had been doing all in his power to draw the Italians from the true Church. In some instances he had been successful and unless a remedy were applied immediately, the result of his activity would be the loss of many of these sheep from the fold.

Father Murphy accepted the challenge, and, in a very short time, an old building, at one time a Protestant church, and later a warehouse, was purchased for services. Repairs were made, and on October 14, 1919, Saint Callistus church was opened, with less than fifty in attendance. Five years later, the success of the enterprise was so marked, that not only was a larger church required, but a school was opened. It was natural for Father Murphy to ask the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to take charge of the school for the Sisters had been coming from St. Mary's High School to conduct catechism classes for Saint Callistus' children. From September, 1925, until September, 1927, the Sisters lived at St. Mary's High School, just five minutes' walk from the little mission. After that they lived at St. Charles convent until the opening of their own convent in 1932. The first year, Sister Mary Clarissima and Sister Mary Antonetta carried on the work. The first day of school thirty-seven children greeted them in the church, where they taught. Mass would be said, the Blessed Sacrament removed to the sacristy, and the teachers and little ones began school work in the church proper. On January 11, 1926, classes were moved

to the new building with ninety children in attendance. At the close of the second year, the attendance was one hundred forty-two. In 1927, two hundred Italians were enrolled, and in 1928, three hundred were under the tutelage of Sister Mary Benjamin, Sister Mary St. Zita, Sister Mary Antonetta, Sister Mary Clarette, Sister Mary Raphael, and Miss Schupp.

In 1929, Father Murphy was relieved in favor of Father Broccole, an Italian. The congregation resisted the change with open violence. They sealed the doors of the church with heavy beams and threatened to bomb any priest who attempted to offer the Holy Sacrifice. For more than a month, women, armed with sticks and clubs, kept guard, both day and night. On July 16 the police interfered and carried off the boldest of them, and the rest went home.

Father Broccole asked to be replaced. Father Keating became the pastor. Mass was offered on July 21, but only a few attended. It took a long time to bring the number back to what it had been when Father Murphy left the parish. During this long, dark experience, the Sisters were permitted to come and go as usual and the school was kept open until the end of the session. Repercussions were to follow later; in September, 1929, one hundred twenty-five children demanded transfers.

In 1930, Saint Callistus parish was placed in the hands of the Pious Clerks of Saint Charles, an Italian community of priests, with Father Cavicchi as pastor. This change was taken more graciously than the first. In September of this year a seventh grade room was opened, while an eighth grade classroom was added the next year. There were nineteen children ready for graduation at the close of the session.

During the summer of 1932, apartments for the Sisters were prepared in the three unused rooms of the school building. There the eight members

of the faculty lived until February, 1930, when they moved into the convent which had just been erected for them. Besides teaching the three hundred thirty-five children who attended St. Callistus, the Sisters have given instruction to more than three hundred public school children who have come regularly every Wednesday and Sunday. The work of both the priest and Sisters in this parish gives them great satisfaction. Instead of prosoletizing and friction, they now see crowds in attendance at the six Sunday Masses. Then, too, there are numerous daily communicants to be seen at Mass every morning, and among them are many of the faces that once shone before the Sisters in Saint Callistus school.<sup>73</sup>

St. Ferdinand parochial school was opened September 17, 1934, by the following Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Sister Mary St. Anna, superior, Sister Mary Domitilla, Sister Mary Rose Esther, Sister Mary Lambert, Sister Mary Justa, Sister Mary Venantius, Sister Mary Sebastienne, Sister Mary Therese Corneille, Sister Mary Nazarius, and Sister Mary Danette. This is the latest Chicago mission to be accepted by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On this memorable day in September the above Sisters left their very comfortable but small convent to travel over cinders and board walks to their new schoolrooms, which were located in the seven bungalows scattered over the St. Ferdinand property. The only mark that distinguished one bungalow from another was the one that each Sister chalked on the building in her charge: the grade to be taught in her bungalow. At eight-forty-five, cinders began to crunch on the board walks and the Sisters realized that the children for whom they had prayed were coming to them for instruction. By nine o'clock the bungalows were well

---

<sup>73</sup>Annals, Saint Callistus School and Convent, Chicago, 1925-1940.

filled. Two hundred ninety-seven registered that first day, and within a short time, three hundred thirty-seven children called St. Ferdinand's their school. A few days after the opening of classes, the Sisters began religious instruction for the Catholic children of the parish who were registered at public schools, and, in this manner, taught three hundred thirty-five public school children. The eighth bungalow was added to the school in 1935 and Sister Mary Evarita came at Christmas-time to teach therein. As Decoration Day approached, the children received additional instructions in preparation for first Holy Communion. This first class was composed of one hundred ninety-six children.

The school year of 1935-1936 brought an enrollment of four hundred-fifty children. This necessitated the opening of another bungalow and more children sought admission than space permitted, so on March 13, 1936, at ten o'clock in the morning, the school children lined up along the walk and watched Father Heeney, the pastor, dig the first shovel of earth for the foundation of the new church and school building. On May 3, Monsignor Morrison officiated at the laying of the cornerstone. At this momentous event the St. Ferdinand children marched in procession headed by The Immaculata High School Band. Events moved rapidly. In May, 1936, the school was inspected by the principals of Mary Lyon, Falconer and Reinberg public schools and was added to the list of accredited city schools. The first graduating class, composed of twenty-six children, received their diplomas in June within the little wooden church on the corner. September 14, 1936, the new building was opened, and soon after, the Sisters moved into the spacious convent built for them at the corner of Mason and Barry. First Communion Day came and went, and, at last, Bishop Sheil came to administer Confirmation. This first Confirmation class, which had been pre-

pared by the Sisters in St. Ferdinand's parish, was made up of two hundred-twenty-seven children from St. Ferdinand's and one hundred sixty-seven children from the public schools of the neighborhood. The church and school were dedicated by Cardinal Mundelein in October, 1937.

Growth is very much in evidence at present in St. Ferdinand's school. There are about seven hundred pupils attending this year and, in spite of the new building, opened in 1936, the portables were again called into use in 1938. It is 1940, but pioneering is still in progress, and another wing is to be added to the present school building before school re-opens in September, 1941.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Annals, St. Ferdinand Convent and School, Chicago.

## CHAPTER IV

### HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGE

Many of the young men and women of Chicago in the first decades following the Civil War felt that with an elementary school training they were sufficiently equipped to cope with any emergency which they might encounter in this rapidly growing metropolis. Undoubtedly, this attitude accounts for the fact that in the school year of 1869-1870, "not more than one per cent of the [Chicago] school population enrolled in High School."<sup>1</sup> To provide a means for the few who desired to continue their education under Catholic auspices, high schools attached to the elementary schools were established for girls in St. Aloysius, Sacred Heart, and St. Pius schools served by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As time went on, the number of students both in the elementary and high school departments of these schools increased so decidedly that, by the latter part of the century, their upkeep had become such a financial burden that only the grade schools could be retained.<sup>2</sup> This worked a hardship on the girls in these districts who desired to continue their education with Sisters. It is true that the Religious of the Sacred Heart did continue their Academy, but this was not large enough to handle all, nor was it within the financial reach of many. The boys had had, since 1870, the opportunity to attend St. Ignatius High School conducted by the Jesuit Fathers. Parochial high schools that were functioning in different sections of Chicago during this period were: a three year high school taught by the Sisters of Providence; a four year high school conducted by the Ladies of Loretto;<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Pierce, A History of Chicago, II, p. 393.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter II, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Sister Mary Evangela Henthorne, "Catholic Secondary Education in Illinois," Mid-America, July, 1935, p. 168.



St. Elizabeth, St. James, and St. Gabriel, all under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy.<sup>4</sup>

Both Sister Mary Hilary, the superior of St. Aloysius at the time, and Father Curran, S.J., the supervisor of the Holy Family schools, lamented the condition, and, in conjunction with all others concerned, were busy trying to find ways and means to reach a solution. One day Father Curran came into Sister Mary Hilary's office at St. Aloysius as she and another Sister were earnestly engaged in discussing the problem of providing a suitable high school for the girls of their schools. Father Curran said that he wished the Sisters of Charity would build a school for the girls as the Jesuits had for the boys. Sister Mary Hilary reminded Father of the poverty of the Congregation and of the immense debt which had just been assumed to erect the Mother House at Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa, and then said, "Father, I've an idea; let us rent a building and try out a central high school plan for a year." Noting Father's eagerness, Sister said, "Not a word of this to anyone; I've not mentioned it to Mother Mary Cecilia."<sup>5</sup> Father Curran urged Sister to put the plan before the Mother General and her Council as soon as possible. This was done, and the case was so well-pleaded that in practically no time Mother Mary Cecilia informed Sister Mary Hilary that the project might be attempted and that Sister should take the initiative, seek a location, rent a building, open a school and be the first superior. This was a big order, but Sister Mary Hilary, nothing daunted, began the search for a building in a convenient

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> An interview with Sister Mary Hilary in Dubuque, June, 1940.

location. Finally, a two story building, at Taylor and Cypress Streets, which had been erected to serve as a store, was rented for the huge sum of seventy dollars a month. This venture may sound very easy of accomplishment in 1940, but, in September, 1899, when just seventy-two young ladies appeared at the new school, each to pay but one dollar per month for her education, the project seemed a financial impossibility. There were many who tried to persuade the Sisters to give up the venture, claiming them to be indeed very zealous, but also very foolish to assume such tremendous responsibilities. But here, as in many other instances in this Congregation's history, the Faith that had guided Mother Mary Francis Clarke and her young Irish companions came to the fore. The Sisters resolved to continue this work for the sake of the souls of these young Chicago girls who were being denied the privilege of a Catholic education. Providence would guide them. What if they were called fools! They had learned that anything worth while was procured only at the cost of sacrifice. At times, however, it appeared to the struggling Sisters that those who accused them of foolishness were correct. A staff of four Sisters was required; many expenses were entailed in making the store building suitable for class purposes; the rental was high. The public schools were new and rather elaborate in comparison; the Sisters had strong Faith, and only that, upon which to build. To show their reliance upon the help of their special protectress, they designated the school as her special property and possession, St. Mary's High School.

The loyalty and enthusiasm shown by the first class did much to encourage the Sisters and help them go ahead with the work of establishing a complete high school. Archbishop Feehan approved of the work that was begun and urged the Sisters to build a permanent structure in which to

carry on the high school. Father Muldoon, later to be consecrated bishop, watched the work from his vantage point at St. Charles. He became an enthusiastic supporter of the venture and never failed to do all in his power to help the Sisters establish St. Mary's. Father Muldoon gave them the use of St. Charles Hall for several months, during which time their building was being completed; he supervised the work on the buildings; he made use of every possible opportunity to make known the splendid work being accomplished by the Sisters at St. Mary's; in fact, he remained always a true friend to the Congregation. Many Sisters in the vicinity helped greatly by encouraging their students to attend St. Mary's after graduation from eighth grade; especially is this true of the Dominican Sisters who were stationed in St. Jarlath's parish. Their aim was one with the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary---"to give girls who had completed the parochial grammar school an opportunity to continue their studies under Catholic auspices."<sup>6</sup>

St. Mary's High School, founded, as has been stated, in 1899, was the first of its kind to be established in the United States--that is, the first central high school for girls, and the first to be financed entirely by a Sisterhood. This fact, evidently, is not generally known, as is shown by the following quotation:

Philadelphia also took the lead in the organization of the first central high school for girls. This began in 1900 with the establishment of three high school "centers" in as many parts of the city, to which girls would come from neighboring parochial schools. Each "center" was in charge of a particular teaching community.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Annals, St. Mary's High School, Chicago.

<sup>7</sup>J.A. Burns and Bernard J. Kohlbrenner, A History of Catholic Education in the United States, N.Y., 1927, p. 248.

In 1900, the first of St. Mary's permanent buildings, a two story brick structure capable of accommodating three hundred pupils, was erected at 1031 Cypress Street on property which the Congregation had purchased from Mr. Edward Fox. Since this building was not ready for occupancy in time for school to open in September, the Sisters accepted the offer extended by Father Muldoon to use St. Charles' Hall as a temporary school until their own building was ready. On the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, November 21, 1900, the classes, freshman, and sophomore, moved into the new St. Mary's. This was a day of great rejoicing for the girls as well as for the Sisters. Progress was rapid and in 1902 demands were so numerous that a commercial department was opened, which later became one of the most popular and successful features of the school.

That the school was needed has been proved by its rapid growth. In 1903 the increased enrollment necessitated the addition of a third story. This same year was marked by the graduation of the charter class of eighteen members. The success that this class enjoyed in regard to procuring entrance into the Chicago Normal College set up a great precedent. Of this group, nine of the eleven who attempted to gain entrance were successful. The high standard of scholastic achievement inaugurated in those early years at St. Mary's has been maintained. Her graduates have been consistently successful in obtaining Normal College entrance. St. Mary's Annals relate that in the year 1915 five hundred in the city took the Normal entrance examinations. Two hundred of these were accepted, and among these two hundred were forty of the forty-two St. Mary's candidates.

In 1911, Loyola University Extension courses were first given at St. Mary's, and were attended by a large number of religious as well as by many Chicago lay teachers who were eager to avail themselves of oppor-

tunities to receive promotions and university credits toward degrees. The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary have consistently kept up their efforts to procure the best type of education for their members.

Another large building was added to St. Mary's in 1911, and, by 1915, the registration reached the six hundred mark.

When the United States became active in the World War, all the St. Mary's students who were over sixteen years of age registered in November, 1917, for the Women's National Defense. Just as soon as this registration was made, these girls, with their characteristic generosity and cheerfulness, gave their time after school and on Saturday to the service of the government. Knitting became as popular as sports among the members of the Junior Red Cross Auxiliary at St. Mary's. The girls not only worked to give St. Mary's a high record, but almost everyone of them was helping with the same type of work in a parish unit as well. This meant that St. Mary's spirit was being spread out into forty-seven Chicago parishes, for, at that time, there were at least that many represented in the student body. Besides the actual labors carried on by these young ladies, through the efforts of students and teachers, St. Mary's High School contributed \$20,616 to the United States War Chest.<sup>8</sup> The graduation exercises of 1918, keeping in line with the spirit of the time, were strictly military, to the glory of which much was added when the great Sousa granted St. Mary's not only the privilege of using "The Stars and Stripes Forever" as the graduation march, but also the pleasure of reading the now famous music from his private manuscript copy.

---

<sup>8</sup>  
War Activities in the Schools of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 1917-1918, Dubuque, 1920, pp. 23-24.

The historical and symbolic pageant, "The Rise and Progress of Christianity" was given on June 10, 1920, by the Catholic schools of Chicago. The purpose of this pageant was to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Silver Jubilee of the Most Reverend Archbishop George W. Mundelein, D.D. One hundred forty-seven floats represented various incidents in the progress of the Christian religion. The St. Mary's High School float, entitled, "Learning, Art, Science, and Literature," won second place, while the third prize went to Holy Name Cathedral School for the float commemorating the "Silver Jubilee of the Archbishop."<sup>9</sup>

St. Mary's Silver Jubilee year marked the erection of another spacious building. Its opening was announced in the Chicago Tribune in an article entitled "New Halls for Old St. Mary's":

Old St. Mary's: the alma mater of many of the pioneer women of Chicago, and today one of the leading Catholic High schools for girls in the archdiocese, will open a new auditorium and gymnasium building February 19, it is announced...The new building...comprises the gymnasium, science laboratories, and art and music departments of the high school as well as an auditorium which will seat 1,200 people...<sup>10</sup>

This addition brought St. Mary's up to the last minute with every manner of modern equipment. The school folder states that "Now [St. Mary's] has 22 classrooms, physical and biological laboratories, 4 commercial rooms, auditorium, domestic science units, cafeteria, music rooms, library and chapel." In these well-furnished quarters, the curriculum consisted of "General Course, College Preparatory, Normal Preparatory, Household

---

<sup>9</sup> Our Herald, Dubuque, January, 1921, p. 220.

<sup>10</sup> Chicago Tribune, February 14, 1925.

Economics, Commercial and Secretarial Courses, Piano, Voice, Violin, Art and Expression." To explain these courses somewhat the school's folder continues, "The General and College Preparatory courses include English, foreign languages, mathematics, science, history, drawing, music, physical education, with the addition of a thorough training in religion, in gentle manners and in all that, according to Catholic ideals, constitutes a refined and solid education."<sup>11</sup>

Upon the day set aside for the celebration of St. Mary's Silver Jubilee in 1925, the Sisters, Alumnae, student body, and many other friends of the Sisters were addressed by the Reverend Claude J. Pernin, S.J. Among other things Father Pernin said:

...You and I have known here for twenty-five years a band of consecrated women who bear her name Mary and show her spirit of "all for God and nothing for self." As Mary passed into the temple, so did they The Sisters turn their back on the world that they might give themselves up to the obscurity of a follower of Mary. By the vow of poverty they have given up all prospect of worldly acquisitions; by the vow of chastity, the noble position of motherhood and wifehood, and the joys of family life. Their very name is lost in that of Mary joined to that of her saints. They surely have shared the obscurity and humiliation of Mary and have striven to spread the glory of God. If you seek God's seal of favor, if you seek their monument, look around you today at the conclusion of their quarter century here in the city of Chicago. If you knew their task twenty-five years ago, you would understand the holy daring of these women, and realize that the spirit that animated them was the same spirit with which Mary stood at the foot of the cross.

...Another characteristic of these women was that they possessed what God urges on all of us, the simplicity of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent-- I say this in praise. They accepted the trend of the times. They knew that the women of Chicago were no longer to be the sheltered creatures of years gone by.

<sup>11</sup> St. Mary's High School Folder, filed for the history of the school.

They realized that many of these children must go forth into the world and take their places in business on equal footings with men. They provided an education that would prepare for the battle of life. They followed two parallel streams, cultural and commercial, and they have succeeded in both. But deep down under this they planted in your hearts the spirit that was distinctive of Mary, that spirit of devotion to God and the Church, and no other education could possibly compete with this; no other education could make you what you are today--the noble Catholic women of Chicago. If not for them, such great results would not have been. If their spirit had not been one of prayer, zeal, and devotion to God, there would not have been firmly fixed in your hearts that love of God that will be there until the end of your days.

The work is just begun. There is this difference between the work of an individual and that of an organization united with the Church of God. The work goes on and on through the years, and long after these ears can hear and this tongue that speaks are dust, their work will continue. For ten or twenty centuries perhaps, this spirit will go on, the spirit of God, secure in His command and promise: "Go forth and teach all nations," and "Behold I am with you all days." 12

From the days of Sister Mary Hilary, Sister Mary Christiana, Sister Mary Columba, Sister Mary St. James, and Sister Mary Avelina, the original staff, St. Mary's High School has always made the practice of religious devotions an essential part of its daily program. Among these may be listed the following: May Day assemblies held in honor of Our Blessed Mother, in earliest days carried out in the corridor, the girls kneeling facing the picture of the Immaculate Conception in the stained glass window at the east end of the building; later, held at dismissal time in the auditorium. Frequent Communions were encouraged, and bands of weekly communicants were



augmented later by the institution of the students' Eucharistic League, inaugurated by Father Dineen, S.J. Perpetual adoration and Communions of reparation were instituted at an early period and are still maintained. Almsgiving was encouraged, and the Catholic Church Extension Society, later the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, found St. Mary's students willing apostles, and as catechists they worked in various Italian districts near at hand. St. Mary's High School, in 1941, rates among the highest in cooperation with every Sodality project begun in the city of Chicago.

St. Mary's was the first independent Catholic girls' High School in Chicago. Archbishop Quigley called it "the product of the unaided efforts of a community of women."<sup>13</sup> It became a chartered institution in 1912, fully accredited to the Catholic University of America, the State University of Illinois, the Teachers' Normal College, and in 1933 a full member of the North Central Association of High Schools and Colleges.

The period between 1926 and 1929 was the peak for St. Mary's. During that time the number in the student body ran between nine hundred and nine hundred-fifty, but the depression and the erection of Mercy High School, Providence High School and The Immaculata High School drew students from old St. Mary's. Since about 1936, however, St. Mary's registration has again been on the increase. The Catholic Directory for 1940 listed St. Mary's High School with six hundred eighty-five students, thirty-five Sisters and three secular teachers on the staff.

As St. Mary's High School was just about at its height, the pressure in the parochial high schools on the North side of Chicago began to weigh so heavily upon the shoulders of many of the local pastors that they appealed

---

<sup>13</sup>Excerpt from an article on The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in The Queen's Work, 1916, by the Reverend L.H. Mullany, S.J.

for help to His Grace, Archbishop Mundelein. The Archbishop recognized the need for a central high school for girls on the North side, so he, in turn, appealed to the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to provide one. With characteristic zeal, they acceded to the request, and immediately began to seek a suitable location and to make plans for an adequate building.

Our Herald, April, 1921, contained this welcome announcement:

The members of our Congregation will be interested in knowing that a beautiful site has been secured for the north side high school which will be opened in Chicago next September. This work is undertaken at the invitation of the Most Reverend Archbishop Mundelein. <sup>14</sup>

Arrangements for the Greenlee property on Irving Park Boulevard at the Lake had progressed so far and well by May 28, 1921, that Mother Mary Isabella sent the following letter to each of the Chicago missions:

St. Joseph Convent,  
Mount Carmel,  
Dubuque, Iowa,  
May 28, 1921.

My dear Sister:

It gives me pleasure to tell you that our new high school on Irving Park Boulevard, Chicago, will be opened in September.

For the present only first year students can be accommodated. However, we hope to be able within a limited time to have everything in readiness for the full four year high school course.

We shall be grateful if you will kindly let us know without delay how many first year girls may be expected from your school...We wish to give His Grace, the Archbishop, an approximate total of pupils from our own schools.

---

<sup>14</sup>Our Herald, Dubuque, Iowa, April, 1921, p. 240.

The following names have been suggested for the new school:

The Immaculata  
 Santa Maria  
 Stella Maris  
 Mary Immaculate

Please ask the Sisters to vote on these names and you will please send at once the results and the above information to me at St. Mary's High School, Chicago.

Begging the prayers of all our dear Sisters for the success of our new undertaking, I am

Affectionately yours in the Sacred Heart,

Sister Mary Isabella<sup>15</sup>

The Sisters of the twenty Chicago schools voted and The Immaculata won the decision. The votes ran this way: The Immaculata, 156; Mary Immaculate, 112; Stella Maris, 64; Santa Maria, 29.<sup>16</sup>

Plans for the new school were numerous and everyone involved was exceedingly busy in the summer of 1921. It was important to give the new high school a good start. Advertisements were run in the New World at frequent intervals that summer. Pictures of the former Greenlee Mansion were carried in the secular papers as well as articles relative to the opening of the high school for first year girls in the present convent building. The plans for the new building, which would house the school in September, 1922, were executed by the architect, Barry Byrne, and work toward their fulfillment was commenced in the memorable summer of 1921. In fact, the school opened in the convent building to the thrilling tune of steam shovels, cement mixers, and other building implements.

---

<sup>15</sup> Scrap Book, Relic Room, Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa.

<sup>16</sup> Community Archives, Dubuque, Iowa.

On September 9, 1921, the first Mass was said in the convent at 640 Irving Park Boulevard, and on September 11, each room of the convent was blessed. Both of these ceremonies were performed by the Reverend Paul M. Breen, S.J., who also was the first to say Mass in the school oratory when it was completed. On September 12, 1921, the doors of the school in the convent were flung open and two hundred-ten girls entered that first day. The custom of an impromptu program for in-coming freshmen was begun right then, and in the telegram which Sister Mary Justitia, first superior, sent to Mother Mary Isabella that day, we learn that there was "marvelous talent in the school." This talent was not permitted to lie dormant for any length of time, for the staff, including Sister Mary Placidia, Sister Mary Evangela, Sister Mary Rafael, Sister Mary Immacula, Sister Mary Adorinus, Sister Mary Laurencita, Sister Mary Genevieve, Sister Mary del Rey, Sister Mary Emilita, Sister Mary Angelica, and Sister Mary Venantius,<sup>17</sup> began immediately to forward these young ladies in every field of culture and learning. The first big event, outside of the usual school happenings, was the Archbishop's visit on November 7, 1921. The girls, dressed in the school uniform, waited in the assembly hall, now the convent chapel, while the Sisters went to the first floor to become a reception committee to meet the Archbishop. The records state that the girls were so quiet in their expectation that Dr. Hoban, who accompanied the Archbishop, turned to the Sister with him and said, "The girls aren't here today, are they?" He was assured that they were. Just as the Archbishop and Dr. Hoban completed the inspection of the school rooms on the first and second floors, they were greeted by a "Welcome Chorus" from the assembled students. It was at this

---

<sup>17</sup> Community Archives, Pioneer List.

time that Sister Mary Editha's hymn "Mother of God, Immaculate" was initiated at The Immaculata. The Archbishop then spoke to the girls, and, while there is no copy of the talk available, two reviews of it were sent to Mother Mary Isabella and are preserved at Mount Carmel. According to the accounts of the Sisters who were present, His Grace began his talk with the old proverb which states, "some people are born fortunate, others acquire fortune, while yet others have fortune cast upon them." That The Immaculata girls belonged to the first class was conclusively proved by him in three propositions: the first, these young girls were fortunate to be children of Catholic parents who so prized Catholic education that they were sending them to a Catholic school; the second, they were at The Immaculata, which was under the patronage of The Immaculate Conception, so that they had the patroness of the United States as their patroness; and finally, they had the Sisters of Charity for their teachers, and most sincere praise of the work of these Sisters was generously and graciously given. His Grace, with gentle humor, continued by saying it was he who conceived the idea of a Catholic high school for girls on the North side, and that, because of him, Mother Mary Isabella spent many a sleepless night after assuming the responsibility of erecting the new structure on its ideal location; and that, inasmuch as he had seen the plans, this new building, when completed, would be one of the finest in America. He added that these girls would be proud of their distinction of being pioneers in this great school, and in years to come they would relate to their children (who, he predicted, would also be Alumnae) the spirit, loyalty and devotion of those early days. It is interesting to note, too, the genuine enthusiasm of the Archbishop, for he further remarked that while the great competitor in the field, St. Mary's High School on the West side, had established traditions and recognized

prestige in the educational world as a backing, this new venture had as its backing only the Archbishop, and he would back the embryonic school in its every undertaking! In conclusion, we read these words of one of Chicago's outstanding spiritual leaders, "great things are expected of you; Chicago expects great things of you because of the many opportunities afforded, and I know I shall not be disappointed in Our Lady's own girls." With characteristic generosity he declared a holiday, for "with autumn drowsiness in the air and with sun-lit waters gently lapping the shores, it was too ideal a day to try to pursue studies."<sup>18</sup>

The Immaculata's first three day retreat closed on Friday, February 17, 1922. It was conducted by the Reverend J.R. O'Neill, S.J., who made a lasting impression on his young audience by stressing particularly the necessity of conviction in spiritual affairs. Each year since 1922 the student body at The Immaculata has been privileged to have a three day retreat. Until 1938, the entire group participated in the same exercises, but since then, the juniors and seniors, while in retreat at the same time as the freshmen and sophomores, are provided with a different retreat master. The custom of closing the retreat ceremonies with Holy Mass, general Communion, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament has continued from the beginning.

In September, 1922, seven hundred students passed beneath the delicately chiseled statue of Our Lady above the doorway, and were duly enrolled as Immaculatans. Of this number, two hundred-twenty were of the last year's freshman group, the famous charter class. Before the year was over, the number had swelled to seven hundred ninety: freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The spring of 1923 witnessed The Immaculata's first graduation. The class was composed of seventy-three members. The next year, 1924,

<sup>18</sup>Letter to Mother Mary Isabella from Sister Mary Justitia, Community Archives.

Cardinal Mundelein conferred the honors of graduation on ninety-three high school graduates and thirty-eight graduates of the two year commercial department. In this graduation address, June 12, 1924, Cardinal Mundelein said,

Graduation day in a school like The Immaculata! What a beautiful day in a girl's life--everything, music, flowers, grateful friends, satisfaction of a task well done, everything possible to make it stand out in memory as a day to be remembered until the end. And yet on this day there are other figures who do not appear on the stage, are not figuring on the program and yet constantly are hovering over everything. In the thoughts of all us here, it is they who are the real heroines in the drama, and, after all, although it is the graduate's day, it is the feast day of the Sisters who taught her, the day on which they see their work completed in those who have gone forth from their schools. What a wonderful contribution they have made to the cause of Christian education and the up-building of the Church of God. The day of graduation is the one day that we have of showing our appreciation of their work. That brought me here, that draws the clergy and that attracts even you. What would education be without our Sisters. Without them even our innocent young boys, our devout girls, and devoted mothers and our exemplary brothers and fathers, even our priests would be a diminished number.

The Sisters are perhaps the greatest force in the Church today. What a debt we owe them, and the debt is growing in the future even more than in the past, for even now in the city of Chicago the communities of women are actually spending millions of dollars, largely borrowed money, in erecting not magnificent mother houses, beautiful chapels, but in practical high schools and chapels such as this at Immaculata. For this they are daily making sacrifices. Perhaps long after our time, credit will be given to them because the initiative in the field of education is largely due to their sacrifices, their worries, their work. We talk about the spirit of the Crusades. It fades into nothingness when we consider the work of the Sisters of our city. That is not confined to the superiors alone; the Sisters in the kitchen do an active part; those teaching first and second grades; in fact, all the Sisters. The same spirit animates them all.

The spirit of love, laudable ambition, active competition between themselves in order that it may further the great cause in which they are enlisted, in the cause of Christian education and all of them are ready to make the same sacrifices for the same cause, the honor of the family, and in this case of the Community of which they are daughters. Is it any wonder that a cause like ours must succeed.

Young ladies, you are the particular care and hope and solicitude of these Sisters. Many a prayer of a good religious has been yours. Let it remain with you then during life. Remember the words of the Gospel: "He to whom much is given, of him much shall be expected." Much has been given to you, and you are going into the world to occupy various stations, some happily to remain behind convent walls, others of you will take your places in the busy turmoil of the world. Wherever you may be, even after many years have gone by, hold high the principles taught you, the ideals seen in the lives of the Sisters, and if you do, you will turn out to be in the various walks of life the real Christian women the Sisters have taught you to be. That for them will be the greatest recompense they can receive here below. God bless you! 19

Immaculata's enrollment climbed quickly, so that in the year 1924-1925 it approximated the one thousand mark. Although this point was not actually reached until 1937, the number of students had been quite constant in the nine hundreds. The two year commercial course was discontinued in June, 1932. Demands in the business world required girls of greater maturity, and furthermore, the Compulsory Education Act demanded attendance in school until the completion of the seventeenth year.

The Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago during June of 1926 brought special honor to The Immaculata High School. Sister Mary Justitia's invitation to the great Cardinal O'Donnell, of Armagh, Ireland, to say Holy Mass at The Immaculata was accepted, word of which was received by telegram

---

<sup>19</sup>Community Archives,



from Father Ryan while the Cardinal was still in New York. Immediately preparations were made to give the much-loved Cardinal a fitting welcome. When he arrived by automobile with a retinue of ecclesiastics, he was escorted from the convent to the school chapel in the auditorium between double rows formed by Immaculata's nine hundred students, the under-graduates dressed in their dark blue uniforms with white veils and the seniors arrayed in their white graduation attire. The Chicago Tribune states that "the Mass was purely formal," and that the choir of seminarians from St. Mary's of the Lake Seminary sang parts of the Mass, while the responses during the Mass and the incidental hymns were sung by the throng of Immaculata students. The Cardinal addressed the Sisters and girls by paying tribute to the great institutions which Cardinal Mundelein had established in Chicago, giving particular credit to his interest in education. He said: "Of all, this is the greatest. The forming of the mind of the youth is a work of the greatest importance--to put the last stroke of culture upon the mind of the young woman is especially important." To the students, the Cardinal said, "You should be happy here under an institution whose teachers know Christ first, and amidst such surroundings here by the most beautiful waters in the world." After giving Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Cardinal halted the girls who were beginning to file quietly out of the chapel, by lifting his hands and saying, "The thing I most wanted to say, I forgot. I wished to say how much I appreciate the manner in which you girls sang; I hope the nuns will extend to you a holiday for bringing joy to the heart of an old Catholic like myself."<sup>20</sup>

The student bodies of both St. Mary's and The Immaculata High Schools

<sup>20</sup>

Newspaper Clippings, Immaculata Scrap Book of the Eucharistic Congress, June, 1926.

participated in the Holy Mass sung by the students of Catholic schools the first morning of the Eucharistic Congress. Attention was drawn to this large group of young women under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the cardinal red hats which they had adopted as a part of their Eucharistic Congress uniform.

The period between 1927 and 1931 saw the gradual development of a departmental curriculum both at St. Mary's and The Immaculata. This meant that each faculty members must prepare herself to become a specialist in the field of her teaching work. The Sisters, therefore, put forth almost superhuman efforts to keep up the high standard of scholarship already established in their schools, and, at the same time, to continue their own advanced university work. Space for more classrooms became a necessity as the traditional school method gave way to the departmental system at The Immaculata. This resulted, in 1926, in the opening of the first floor of the apartment building facing Bittersweet Place, known as Carmel Hall, to which the Clothing and Textiles Department was transferred. The two upper floors of this building were converted into living quarters for twenty-two of the Sisters who took up their abode therein in 1927. The fifty feet of vacant property joining the two Bittersweet apartments was obtained by the Community in 1931. This purchase rounded out the beautiful campus and now serves as an educational garden.<sup>21</sup>

By 1932 departmental type of work became the general method employed at The Immaculata. The school had from its inception been placed on the State of Illinois A+ rating list; in 1932 it became a full member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary schools. This rating

---

<sup>21</sup> Immaculata High School Annals, 1927-1933.

has been maintained ever since, thus making it possible for Immaculata graduates to obtain entrance into any college in America.

At The Immaculata, the dominating power of the student body is, and always has been, the active religious spirit that is absorbed and retained as a characteristic of the student. The ideal of the faculty has always been to develop such militant Catholicity that it will remain part of an Immaculata for her entire life. To accomplish this the better, The Immaculata, along with many other high schools and colleges of the archdiocese, heartily responded to the first invitation to become a member of CISCA, (known then as CISCORA (1928). Each year since that formal organization of religious activities, The Immaculata has given top place in school activities to maintaining a wholesome share in every phase of Sodality life, and one of the most honored offices among the students is that of sodality prefect. An outstanding event took place in February, 1933, when The Immaculata sodalists staged a World's Fair of Catholic Action, presenting the Catholic literary activities of twenty-three nations, thus foreshadowing the Century of Progress that opened the following summer. Another important occurrence of that year was the ceremony of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart as the Chief Official of the school, on the First Friday of June. Renewal of this beautiful and touching ceremonial has since grown into one of the treasured traditions of The Immaculata.

Besides the regular four year college entrance course, the school affords opportunities in almost every phase of specialized cultural activity. There are large classes of music: piano, violin, voice, orchestra and band instruments; a Glee Club, a band, an orchestra, an art guild, Blue Mantle players, a camera club, St. Cecilia Club, as well as opportunities to develop journalistic talent in the publication of The Immaculata News and

the Year Book, entitled Lady in Blue. Organizations fostering creative writing in English and apologetic ability in religion were established in 1935-1936. An anthology, Blue Quill, containing student creative writings, has been published annually since 1936.

The Official Catholic Directory for 1940 listed The Immaculata's student body at one thousand twenty-four with a teaching staff which includes forty-five Sisters and seven lay instructors. That year's graduating class was the largest in the history of the school and with the addition of its two hundred fifty-seven members, The Immaculata Alumnae membership reached three thousand.

From 1929 to 1937 a great number of Catholic children sought admission into public high schools. Although the tuition rate in the regional Catholic high schools was, and is, moderate, many could not meet this obligation, and, furthermore, the facilities in these regional schools were already taxed. To cope with this situation, Cardinal Mundelein had six parochial junior high schools opened in the city during 1937. Among these six are Mundelein Cathedral High School (in the Holy Name Cathedral parish) and Sacred Heart Parish High School, both under the direction of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The former has gradually developed a full four year course from which the first class will be graduated in June, 1941. Mundelein High School has two hundred in attendance.<sup>22</sup> The Sacred Heart High School, after years of inactivity, now holds classes for one hundred-fifty first and second year students.

Cardinal Mundelein appealed, in 1928, to the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary to found a Catholic college for women in Chicago. To the Superior General, Mother Mary Isabella, B.V.M., the Cardinal explained

---

<sup>22</sup>The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.

his ideas and suggested plans. In the face of the tremendous landslide in stocks and property, which ran rampant through the land in 1929, Mother Mary Isabella, spurred on by a confidence in the Providence of God and a knowledge of the need of higher Catholic education for young women in Chicago then and in the future, dared to undertake the tremendous charge which the Cardinal had placed upon her and the Community.

On July 16, 1929, Sister Mary Justitia was appointed to take charge of the arrangements for the new college to be located on Sheridan Road at its juncture with Devon. Mundelein College was the name chosen for this skyscraper structure designed by the architects Joseph McCarthy and Nairne Fisher, under the supervision of Mother Mary Isabella. On September 8, 1929, Sister Mary Justitia and four other Sisters moved into the small residence on the property at 6367 Sheridan Road. The W.J. Lynch Construction Company was awarded the contract, and on the Community's ninety-sixth anniversary, November 1, 1929, work was actually begun on the "only skyscraper college for women in the world." When, later, in 1931, Cardinal Mundelein, on a visit to Rome, showed His Holiness Pius XI pictures of the college, the Holy Father remarked, "I don't know that it is the greatest college in the world, but I am sure it is the one nearest heaven."<sup>23</sup>

The building was only one phase of preparation. Sisters were sent to several universities for advanced work, for it was important that the college get a good start in the scholastic field. The cornerstone was laid without ceremony, and into it were placed a portrait of Cardinal Mundelein, city and state documents, a copy of the history of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and a box of precious medals

---

<sup>23</sup>Chicago Sunday Tribune, September 27, 1931.

of the Sisters' various patrons. From the beginning of work on the building until its completion, the Sisters daily besought St. Philomena to prevent accidents to the men employed in the construction. The saint did her work well, for not a single serious injury was suffered.

The following summer, fifteen Sisters now living in the bungalow, watched the building grow. The spacious basement contained the student lounge, book store, locker rooms, store rooms, laundry, and rooms for the lighting, heating, and ventilating systems. The first floor comprised the offices of administration, tea room, swimming pool, auditorium, and formal reception rooms. Each of the other floors was given over to one or more departments of the college. The sixth floor took on special significance, for it was prepared to be the home of the science laboratories which include those for chemistry, physics, zoology, botany, geology, astronomy, embryology, and bacteriology, as well as two lecture rooms. In connection with the physics department the Foucault pendulum is worthy of note. This pendulum, which swings nine stories in an unoccupied elevator shaft, is the

longest of its kind in existence and the only one of its kind, so far as is known, to have its movement recorded by an electric spark. Besides recording the precession of the earth, the pendulum enables the physics department to keep a permanent record of the value of the gravitational constant for the Chicago area." 24

The seventh floor was designed for the music department; the eighth for drama and art, while the six upper stories of the skyscraper building were arranged to provide living quarters for the Sisters.

Constructed of white limestone, rising to a height of 190 feet, the college presents a picture of striking beauty in its absolute simplicity and long sweeping lines. The spiritual and intellectual ideals of the college are symbolized by the colossal

angel figures, carved from stone, which stand guard at its entrance. Uriel, the Light of God, stands at the right of the entrance, holding an open book in one hand and pointing with the other to a cross carved high on the facade. Jophiel, the Beauty of God, stands at the left, with one hand supporting the star-set earth surmounted by a cross, and with the other lifting high the torch of knowledge. <sup>25</sup>

The Sisters first occupied the new college building on September 1, 1930, and on September 5, First Friday, the Reverend George A. MacDonald, S.J. offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the improvised chapel in room 204. The Stella Maris Chapel on the second floor could not be used until November 1, at which time the Reverend Joseph Reiner, S.J. celebrated the first Holy Mass in the new chapel.

The following Sisters carried on the numerous duties at the new college during its first year: Sister Mary Justitia, superior, Sister Mary Tertulla, Sister Mary Angelita, Sister Mary Evangela, Sister Mary Christella, Sister Mary Alfonso, Sister Mary Bartella, Sister Mary Aluigi, Sister Mary Angelica, Sister Mary Angeletta, Sister Mary Alisa, Sister Mary AnnaRose, Sister Mary Bernarda, Sister Mary Callista, Sister Mary Cecile, Sister Mary Consuelo, Sister Mary Columba, Sister Mary Donald, Sister Mary Ethna, Sister Mary Francine, Sister Mary Francis Xavier, Sister Mary Gregoria, Sister Mary Irma, Sister Mary John Michael, Sister Mary Janet, Sister Mary Lorraine, Sister Mary Laurelle, Sister Mary Leola, Sister Mary Madelina, Sister Mary Robert Hugh, Sister Mary Rafael, Sister Mary Sylvester, Sister Mary St. Victor, Sister Mary St. Leonard, Sister Mary St. Remi, Sister Mary St. Genevieve, Sister Mary Vincentina, Sister Mary Virginelle, Sister Mary Augustina, Sister Mary Katrina, Sister Mary Avaline. <sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Mundelein College Annals.

Classes began on September 29, 1930, with two hundred-fifty names on the register. Courses were offered in the following departments: art, astronomy, biology, chemistry, classics, economics, education, English, French, geology, German, history, home economics, journalism, library science, mathematics, music, philosophy and psychology, physical education, physics, political science, religion, sociology, Spanish, and speech.<sup>27</sup>

In 1932, under the direction of Dr. Arthur Murphy, now president of St. Mary's College, Leavenworth, Kansas, the college inaugurated a course in Papal Encyclicals.<sup>28</sup> The course was discontinued for a time, but was again offered in 1930 with the Reverend William Boyd and the Reverend Francis J. Trainor conducting it. This Encyclical course was especially recommended by the Holy Father and is designed to carry out his wishes, "bringing to bear upon the most pressing problems of the day the full force of those principles of justice and charity in which alone they will find their solution."<sup>29</sup>

Material expansion for the college was needed in 1934, so the two homes located between Mundelein College proper and the shore of Lake Michigan were purchased by the Community. The "brick house" between them became Philomena Residence Hall for students from outside the city and for those from remote suburban districts, who find it more convenient to live at the college. The second building, spoken of as "the marble house," has been converted into the library, originally located on the fourth floor of the college building. On the first floor of this former residence may

---

<sup>27</sup> Mundelein College Catalogue, 1931-1932, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Skyscraper Files, Mundelein College.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



be found the card catalogue, the charging desk, two spacious reading rooms, a periodical room with more than a hundred current magazines and newspapers as well as bound periodicals, librarians' offices and work rooms. The second and third floor rooms have been converted into stack rooms with accommodations for seventy-five thousand volumes.<sup>30</sup> One room on the second floor of the library is called the "Rothensteiner Room," the books contained therein being part of the gift of the Most Reverend John Rothensteiner, late "censor librorum" of the archdiocese of St. Louis. This collection numbers about ten thousand volumes, many of which are early editions including priceless Aldines, Bodonis, and Elzevirs. Another room on the same floor contains the valuable collection of the late Bishop Muldoon. It is made up of two thousand volumes in Greek, Latin, and French, including vellum-bound volumes of the early Fathers of the Church.<sup>31</sup>

Now that schedules and elevators, a vital part of a skyscraper college, run more smoothly at Mundelein, it seems a long way back to that first year in the new building when everything was in a state of continuous adjustment. There were innumerable problems for each day: keeping pace with older schools, winning student respect and confidence, adjusting schedules to meet the needs of sophomores and juniors who had come from various other schools to the new college, and, perhaps the most difficult task, the stretching of the faculty personnel to cope with the ever-increasing needs. To find strength to meet the drain of the new college, cooperation was sought and found--the faculty helped; the students helped; Sisters on all the Community's missions helped; novices, jubilarians, the infirm did their share to lighten the burden.

---

<sup>30</sup> Mundelein College Catalogue, 1939-1940, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

The officers of the college for the first year were: George, Cardinal Mundelein, chancellor; Sister Mary Justitia, president; Sister Mary Evangela, dean; Sister Mary Christella, registrar; Sister Mary Alfonso, econome; Sister Mary Bartella, bursar; Sister Mary Tertulla and Sister Mary Angelita, councillors to the president. The faculty was composed of thirty-four Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the following professors from Loyola University: Claude J. Pernin, S.J., religion; Leonard H. Otting, S.J., philosophy; T.J. Bouscaren, S.J., psychology; Samuel Knox Wilson, S.J., American history; Reverend Eneas B. Goodwin, J.D., political science; Reverend D. Bellemare, French conversation; Paul Kiniery, Ph. D., sociology; Raymond Belloc, S.J., spiritual director for the students; Francis J. Ryan, Ph. D., education; George M. Schmeing, M.S., chemistry, and William H. Conley, B.S.C., debating; as well as Maxine Garner Nelson, A.M., English; Ethel Magnuson, B.S., swimming; Beatrice Marshall, A.B., physical education; Otte A. Singenberger, Glee Club and choral; H. J. Beringer, orchestra; and Monica Reynolds, R.N., home hygiene.<sup>32</sup>

The college has always placed emphasis on the creative ability of the students by presenting annually awards for creative writing, creative dramatics, and creative art. The first issue of The Skyscraper, one of the three regular publications of the college, appeared January 30, 1931. This is a bi-weekly publication and provides all that a news sheet should for a college. It is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press from which it has consistently received All-American Honors; from the Catholic Press Association, it has merited All-Catholic Honors. The Clepsydra, a literary magazine, which contains student essays, stories, sketches,

---

<sup>32</sup>  
Mundelein College Annals.

reviews, and verse has been issued annually since 1932. This publication is edited by the Mundelein College unit of the Catholic Poetry Society of America.<sup>33</sup>

To bring about the fulfillment of the aim of the college to "uphold standards for sound scholarship, cultivated taste and disciplined intelligence; to train in fundamentals of morality and religion; to equip successive generations of youth to live wholly and generously in the world of affairs and to give for the commonweal a service of loyalty, self-sacrifice, and patriotism"<sup>34</sup> required a strong foundation. To acquire the proper solidity for such an undertaking, the faculty and Mundelein student body began, while the college was in its infancy, to establish a set of worthwhile traditions. Among those which began almost with the school were: the yearly retreat, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for the adoration of the students on First Fridays, the official opening of the school year with Mass of the Holy Ghost, the candle-lighting ceremonies at Christmas time, the schedule of entertainment provided by the Laetare Players, musical programs scattered throughout the year, and the Honors Day convocation. The following clubs, which were soon organized, indicate the wide scope of student activity: Laetare Players, Glee Club, Orchestra, Skyscraper Staff, Classical Club, Cecilians, Chemistry Club, German Club, Commerce Club, Home Economics and Stylus Clubs, Debating Club, The Terrapin Club, Women's Athletic Association, Art Club, Children's Theater, Organ Guild, Biology Club, Student Activities Council, Girl Scouts, the Political-Historical Association, which later developed into the International Relations Club.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>Skyscraper Files.

<sup>34</sup>Mundelein College Annals.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

The college was dedicated by George, Cardinal Mundelein amidst great splendor, June 3, 1931. At this time the Cardinal blessed each room on the fourteen floors, and turned the switch which started the Kilgen Liturgical organ, his gift to the school.

The first graduating class, consisting of twenty-three members, received their diplomas from the hand of the Cardinal, June 3, 1932. In 1933, Bishop Sheil conferred degrees upon thirty graduates, and the following year, eighty-eight members of the charter class were graduated, with Cardinal Mundelein officiating and conferring the Bachelor of Arts degree upon his niece, Miss Rita Eppig.

Mundelein College, during its ten years of growth, has become accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; the Department of Education, Springfield, Illinois; the Catholic University of America, and the University of Illinois, which gives it Class A rating. The college holds membership in the American Council on Education, the National Catholic Educational Association, the Association of American Colleges, and the Association of Illinois Colleges.<sup>36</sup>

Attendance at Mundelein has more than doubled since that September day in 1930 when two hundred-fifty young women began work in the college. The Official Catholic Directory for 1940 places the enrollment at six hundred-seventy. Faculty membership has also increased: it now comprises fifty-eight Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and twenty other professors.<sup>37</sup>

There have been five hundred ninety-nine graduates from Mundelein

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> The Official Catholic Directory, 1940.

College to date. They are engaged in the following fields: teaching in high schools and colleges; coaching dramatics and athletics; working as journalists, advertisers, radio script writers; studying for higher degrees in graduate and professional schools; doing research in languages and in science; appearing on national radio programs; winning success as commercial artists, home economists, designers; holding positions as secretaries, statisticians, dietitians, laboratory technicians; serving the commonwealth as religious teachers and hospital administrators, and as social workers; and managing their own homes with the graciousness and efficiency of educated Catholic womanhood.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> The Skyscraper, September 28, 1940.

## C O N C L U S I O N

There were no high-powered real estate salesmen with their talk of developments, prospects, suburban additions, in the spring of 1833. The purchase of land was negotiated rather simply in those days. There was definitely no complexity about Mary Francis Clarke's consideration and purchase of her particular field. Its site must lie in Paradise. It must be wide with a gracious sweep to it. As for its fertility . . . She knew well how to plant, and Heaven would give the increase. And Heaven gave with customary Heaven-lavishness.

The seedlings set out between the cobblestones of Willings Alley in Philadelphia, in 1833, took root and sent up sturdy shoots. By 1867 the diocese of Dubuque was enriched by fifteen thriving establishments in which Mary Francis Clarke's daughters labored with her to produce a splendid harvest of souls for Christ.

By 1870, twenty-seven per cent of all the children in Catholic schools in Chicago were being educated by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1940, ten and two thirds per cent of the 120,000 children in the Chicago Catholic elementary schools were being taught by these same Sisters in their twenty-seven parochial schools, four of which offered either commercial or high school subjects. In addition, fifteen and one-half per cent of the 12,630 girls enrolled (in 1940) in the Catholic high schools of the city were under the guidance of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the two regional high schools established, financed, and maintained by the Community. Moreover, a representative number were pursuing work at a higher level under the Community's direction at Mundelein College. To date, Mundelein College has had 599 graduates; St. Mary's and The Immaculata High Schools, more than 7,500. In the entire

city, 75,000 (a conservative estimate) have been graduated from schools conducted by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Bearing the Word which in early Catechism lessons they came to know as the "open, Sesame" to happiness, these thousands of "B.V.M." students have gone forth into almost every field of human activity; they are the unsung heroes and heroines who keep Faith and Hope and Love aglow despite poverty, illness, disappointment; they are the doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, artists, scientists, business men, who hold fast those lessons of loyalty to Christ and His ideals, learned from the Sisters in the morning of their lives; they are the nine hundred and more Chicago girls, now members of this Community, who have received inspiration and guidance to carry on the work of the Community, which they came to know and value through their school years; they are the three hundred and more other religious who have responded to Christ's call to serve in other communities; they are the five hundred priests who daily, in offering the Holy Sacrifice, remember the Sisters who guided and encouraged them in their formative years.

Membership in the Community numbered close to one hundred-sixty when the Sisters opened their first Chicago schools. In December, 1940, there were one thousand eight hundred sixty-nine living members. Today, in all parts of the United States, they conduct one hundred twenty-one schools, including two colleges, five academies, thirty parochial high schools, four community-owned high schools, and one hundred-nine elementary parochial schools. In Chicago, there were, in 1940, 16,780 enrolled in the Congregation's schools; outside the city, 24,284 more made a total of 41,064 students under the guidance of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Consonant with the spirit of the Church as expressed in the Encyclical, Divini Illius Magistri, of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, is the educational mission of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, namely, the formation of Christ in souls. In scope it is as wide as the world is wide, for, according to their vocation, they are "to live in any part of the world where there is hope of God's greater service and the help of souls;" and as high as Heaven is high, for, the ends for which God has called together the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary are "the glory of God and their own perfection," . . . and the salvation of their neighbor, "to be effected by the Christian instruction and education of children by the Sisters in their schools."

\*

\*

\*



## (Books)

- Burns, C.S.C., Very Rev. J.A., and Kohlbrenner, Bernard J. A History of Catholic Education in the United States. New York, 1937. Benziger Bros.
- Callan, R.S.C.J., Louise. The Society of the Sacred Heart in North America, with an introduction by Gilbert J. Garraghan. New York, 1937. Longmans.
- Code, Rev. Joseph B. Great American Foundresses. New York, 1929, Macmillan.
- Code, Rev. Joseph B. The Veil is Lifted. Milwaukee, 1932. Bruce.
- Conroy, S.J., Rev. Joseph P. The Life of Arnold Damen. New York, 1930. Benziger Bros.
- Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Dubuque, 1928.
- Custom Book of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Dubuque, 1928.
- Dehey, Elinor. Religious Orders of Women in the United States. Hammond, Ind., 1930. W.B. Conkey.
- Doran, Sister Mary Lambertina, B.V.M. In the Early Days. Pages from the Annals of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1833-1887. St. Louis, 1925. Herder.
- Garraghan, S.J., Gilbert J. The Catholic Church in Chicago. Chicago, 1921. Loyola University Press.
- Harmon, Rev. Thomas A. History of the Annunciation Parish. Chicago, 1916.
- Missions and Superiors of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Dubuque, Iowa, 1938.
- Mulkerins, S.J., Brother Thomas M. Holy Family Parish, Chicago, Priests and People. Chicago, 1923. Universal Press.
- The Official Catholic Directory. New York, 1940. P. J. Kennedy.
- Pierce, Bessie Louise. A History of Chicago, Vol. II, 1848-1871. New York, 1940. Knopf.
- Thompson, Joseph J., ed. The Archdiocese of Chicago, Antecedents and Developments. Des Plaines, Ill., 1920. St. Mary's Training School.

War Activities of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1917-1918. Dubuque, 1920. Mount Carmel Press.

(Manuscripts)

Annals from Community Archives, Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa:  
1867-1940.

Annals of St. Agatha Convent and School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1895-1940.

Annals of St. Bridget Convent and School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1876-1929.

Annals of St. Callistus' Convent and School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1925-1940.

Annals of St. Charles Borromeo Convent and School, Chicago,  
Illinois; 1883-1940.

Annals of St. Cornelius Convent and School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1926-1940.

Annals of St. Dorothy's Convent and School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1916-1939.

Annals of St. Ferdinand Convent and School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1934-1940.

Annals of Holy Cross School, Chicago, Illinois: 1901-1940.

Annals of Holy Name Cathedral Convent, Chicago, Illinois:  
1904-1910.

Annals of The Immaculata High School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1927-1933.

Annals of St. Jerome Convent, Chicago, Illinois: 1905-1940.

Annals of St. Mary's High School, Chicago, Illinois:  
1899-1925.

Annals of Mundelein College, Chicago, Illinois: 1930-1936.

Annals of Our Lady of Angels School, Chicago, Illinois: 1900-1910.

Annals of Our Lady, Help of Christians Convent, Chicago,  
Illinois: 1907-1940.

Annals of St. Pius Convent, Chicago, Illinois:

Annals of Presentation Convent, Chicago, Illinois: 1932-1940.

Annals of St. Tarcissus School and Convent, Chicago, Illinois: 1926-1940.

Annals of St. Vincent School, Chicago, Illinois: 1883-1940.

Archives of the Community, Box I, II, III, "Chicago", Dubuque, Iowa: 1867-1940.

Clippings from The Immaculata Scrap Book, Chicago, Illinois:

Letters Relative to Schools, Mother General's Office, Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa.

Our Lady of Lourdes, School Files, Chicago, Illinois.

Pioneer List, Community Archives, Dubuque, Iowa.

Record of Missions, Community Archives, Dubuque, Iowa.

Record of Members, Community Archives, Dubuque, Iowa.

Silver Jubilee Sermon, St. Mary's High School, Chicago, Illinois: Delivered by Rev. Claude J. Pernin, S.J., 1925.

(Periodicals)

The Canterburian, St. Thomas of Canterbury Parish News, Chicago, Illinois: November, 1916.

James O'Donnell Bennett, "Irish Primate Brings Spirit of St. Patrick." The Chicago Sunday Tribune, June 20, 1926.

James O'Donnell Bennett, "Pope Praises Great Catholic College Here." The Chicago Sunday Tribune, September 27, 1926.

Dedication Booklet, Our Lady of Lourdes, Chicago, 1916.

Golden Jubilee Booklet, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, 1940.

Golden Jubilee Booklet, St. Pius Parish, Chicago, 1924.

Golden Jubilee Booklet, St. Vincent Parish, 1876-1926, Chicago.

Henthorne, Sister Mary Evangela, B.V.M., "Foundations of Catholic Secondary Education in Illinois." Mid-America, An Historical Review, Vol. VII, New Series, Vol. VI, No. 3, July, 1935.

The Immaculata News, 1927-1941. The Immaculata High School,  
Chicago, Illinois.

St. Mary's Herald, 1932-1940. St. Mary's High School, Chicago.

Mundelein College Catalogues, 1931-1932; 1939-1940, Chicago.

"New Halls for Old St. Mary's," The Chicago Tribune,  
February 14, 1926.

Our Herald, Mount Carmel, Dubuque, Iowa. 1914-1926; 1933-1940.

"Report of The Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago  
for the Year 1939-1940," The New World, January 3, 1941.  
January 3, 1941.

Silver Jubilee Booklet, Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chicago, 1915.

Silver Jubilee Booklet, St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Chicago, 1910.

Silver Jubilee Booklet, St. Gertrude Parish, Chicago, 1912-1937.

The Skyscraper, 1931-1941. Mundelein College, Chicago.

Sunday School Messenger, Vols. V, XIX, II, published by the  
Holy Family Parish Sunday School Association.

The Vincentian Weekly, Sunday, October 31, 1926.

The thesis, "The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Their Schools in Chicago, 1867-1940", written by Sister Mary Anna Rose Callan, B.V.M., has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Rev. Joseph Roubik, S.J.

March 17, 1941

Dr. Paul Kiniery

March 31, 1941